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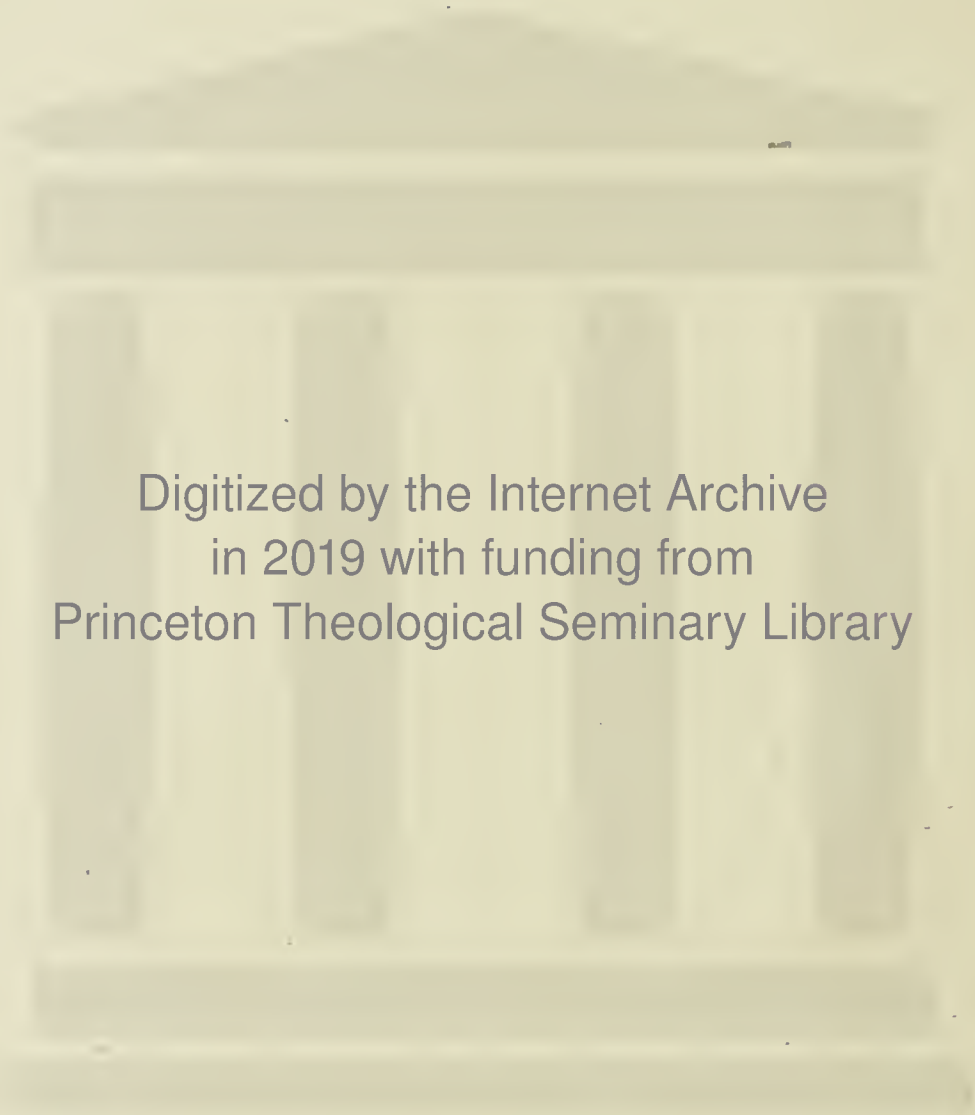
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BOSTON LECTURES.

BOSTON LECTURES,

1872.

CHRISTIANITY AND SCEPTICISM:

EMBRACING A CONSIDERATION OF

IMPORTANT TRAITS

OF

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE AND EXPERIENCE,

AND OF

LEADING FACTS IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST.

BOSTON:
CONGREGATIONAL PUBLISHING SOCIETY,
No. 13 CORNHILL.

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CHRISTIANITY AND SCEPTICISM.

LECTURES.

NOTE.

THE first course of "Boston Lectures" treated mainly of philosophical subjects; the second was chiefly taken up with themes of Biblical criticism; the present enters upon a consideration of certain internal evidences of Christianity. The opening lecture draws an argument from the general character of the Christian system, as a system not merely suited to our wants, but necessary to the true progress of the race. The second considers more particularly the connection of Christian doctrine with the progress which is truest and deepest, — namely, toward perfection of character. The third brings to view the traits and the significance of what is peculiar in the Christian "consciousness"; and the fourth, the divine excellency and authority of the Moral Law. The five remaining lectures are chiefly given up to a consideration of prominent facts in the life of Christ: beginning with the incarnation; then discussing the unique testimony of the Apostle John, in his gospel; then presenting the witness of the other Apostles, and especially of Judas; following this with an array of facts and arguments proving the resurrection; and concluding with a comprehensive review of the whole life of Christ on earth, its most distinctive traits, and its total significance.

JUNE 13, 1872.

I.

THE ADJUSTMENT BETWEEN THE NATURAL LAW OF PROGRESS AND THE CHRISTIAN LAW.

BY REV. GEORGE F. MAGOUN, D.D.

ALL parties in relation to Christianity now recognize and affirm a Law of Human Progress of some kind, — its champions and its assailants, and those who ignore it, or profess indifference, as well. It has come to be a test of the Christian religion itself, how it is related to such a law, whether in fellowship or in hostility, — independent, auxiliary, or inclusive of it. If there be a Natural Law of Progress, it must be other than that affirmed in the "Naturalistic" Doctrine, controverted by Christian thinkers in these lectures and elsewhere, and, as it seems to me, successfully. There must be a possible adjustment between this Law and the Christian Law, since both are of God. This adjustment will be rational and satisfactory, saving the just claims of each. I attempt here to indicate it. But this Natural Law, if found, is not to be found in civilization, or in some element of it, like science or culture, which, in a loose sense of terms, are said to necessitate Progress and dispense with Christianity; for each of these is plainly an effect of the Law, and a part of progress itself, not

the Law, nor the cause of it: — a multiform and indeterminate effect, too; while any cause involved in the Natural Law which we seek, is determinate and one, as that involved in the Christian, or extra-natural, Law is one. It has become the fashion with many, to cover in Christianity under civilization as itself an effect of the advance achieved by mankind twenty centuries ago.* But I may assume here, that this has been refuted; and that the Christian Religion plainly, and *par eminence*, contains a cause, or it is nothing. Positions as inaccurate, and therefore harmful, have been taken on the other side. Some venture or are betrayed into the extreme and hazardous assertion, that there is no Progress in the world save from Christianity — no other law whatever; which can never be accepted as part of the evidence in its favor by those who do not accept Christianity, nor by the best informed among those who do.

The multitudinous discussions and varied learning the subject has called out, with the disclosures Progress itself is ever making, ought to render the adjustment proposed easy to patient and careful thought. And it is a necessary part of the internal evidence of our religion, in the wider sense which

*This is the drift of much that is now said on the Comparative Study of Religions. Possibly, some may suppose that even if Christianity is treated as a mere result of civilization it may yet be held, of supernatural origin, — civilization itself being so viewed, in the last analysis,— but this would not justify the claim hitherto made for Christianity; and the argument for that claim must needs be so obscure and subtle as to be worthless, with ninety-nine in a hundred of intelligent men. It is, as supernatural in the immediate and obvious sense, that its friends vindicate the Christian Religion as containing a Law of Progress.

that phrase has acquired in our day, not only that it brings into human society and history a Christian Law of Progress, but also that this is adjustable with any Natural Law that may be shown to exist.

We must start with determining and limiting the meaning of the well-worn phrase "Law of Progress." It is not employed with any precision. Certain just and necessary distinctions in the use of both of its terms must be established. The very word, "Progress," and the word "Law" hardly less, is liable to let us out into a chaos of notions, dogmas, and speculations, swept by currents and counter-currents of thought, on which the likeliest of all things is that we shall lose our way. We sail for port to-day, and not for the open sea. We may not find this or that harbor, which some or others look for expectant through wind and mist, but we can find one, please God, with good guidance, in which we may anchor and ride secure.

I. We determine and limit, first, the term Progress. (1.) In the sense of the improvement of the whole state of things on earth, a sense often mingled with the proper one, it offers a theme too large and indefinable for any such handling as is possible here. And the globe on which man dwells might, supposably, be ever growing better; order, beauty, production, use, in all things increasing; the elements it contains, living, organic, and inorganic, while subject neither to multiplication nor to diminution, coming into ever superior combinations, through rational selection, or some conceived "natural selection," its vegetable and vital growths assuming finer, richer, and more valuable forms, constantly *and uni-*

versally; in a word, everything pertaining to the globe and its other occupants advancing ever from more imperfect conditions to less imperfect in all respects, and going onward toward perfection; but all this would not necessitate progress in man. It may be both philosophic and Christian, to believe in this as the work of God through natural laws. But it does not fall within the present subject. If man knew all this, it would imply his advance in the single point of knowledge, without question; if he had a hand in effecting it, in the two points of knowledge and skill. But as the individual man is often sinking while his conditions are rising, so very possibly it might be with the race. Mr. Marsh, in his well-known work on "Man and Nature," shows the immense waste in the past by human agency* even to extirpation of organic forms which man cannot consume. He shows that man alone is an essentially destructive being; that "as he advances in civilization he gradually eradicates or transforms every spontaneous product of the soil he occupies"; that another such evil era as can be traced backwards — making the world largely "an unfit home for its noblest inhabitant," — would threaten the deprivation, barbarism, and even extinction of the species; and that the counter-process of physical improvement in the later centuries gives thus far "but faint hope that we shall yet make

* The injuriousness of man makes other agencies injurious that were not such in themselves; in the condition of barbarism, he begins an indiscriminate warfare on vegetable and animal; during the two thousand years before colonization commenced, conferring no benefit on this continent, he reduced millions of square miles of the fairest and most fertile portions of the other to barren deserts. [See Marsh.]

full atonement for our spendthrift waste of the bounties of nature."

Now, this *might* be only the sacrifice of the globe to the dweller upon it, the lower contributing to the improvement of the higher; and even ineffectual efforts, through civilizing agencies to save the loss as well as secure the gain, might exhibit Human Progress. Moreover, a supernatural interposition, turning "a fruitful land into barrenness for the wickedness of them that dwell therein," might be a means of such Progress. And the industrial arts, agricultural and mechanical, necessary to the recovery of the world — if only these existed, and if these could exist alone — could not, save by such Progress, have come into being. But the simple enlarging of the occupancy and cultivation of the earth, every land and island of the sea, even, would no more show *human* improvement than the emigration of farmers into the newer west, and their constant migration there into newer counties with the same implements and processes as their fathers, would show advance in scientific farming. We Americans ever confound mere territorial expansion with progress. Comfort and luxury also may increase, and the men who enjoy them be under a doom of decline; or the reverse of this as easily be true. Such a doom, the late Dr. Nathan Lord believed to be fixed of God, for both man and the world, while he held that temporary improvement in things is still possible, and is pleasing to God. Mr. Marsh admits, that in the Old World no species of native forest-tree or vegetable is yet known to have been quite extirpated, and also that commerce

and agricultural industry now depend chiefly on "vegetable and animal products, hardly known to Greek, Roman, and Jewish civilization"; but he indicates the probable fact "that man has *intentionally* transferred fewer plants than he has accidentally* introduced into countries foreign to them." Whatever shall yet be done to turn back the decay of even new lands, as the reckless pioneer wastes and harries them, and to restore immense desolated and depopulated tracts in Europe, Asia, and Africa, larger, taken together, than all Europe is, and to utilize the yet untouched resources of nature, must bear a certain definite relation to the improvement of man himself, but is not to be confounded with it, as is almost universally done. Neither the Natural Law, nor the Christian, covers any such supposed, and yet future, improvement of the earth, or of the whole state of things."

(2.) Nor is what is known as "development" in scientific and philosophical circles, the same with Progress, under the Natural Law or the Christian, nor will it help account for either. Three current words are now largely and loosely treated as synonymous; Progress, Development, Evolution,— but synonymes they cannot be. One of Herbert Spencer's books confound all three under one title, "Illustrations of *Universal* Progress," as his thinking there and everywhere confounds them. Development is in idea more than Progress, and Evolution is more than Development. Progress is the advance of any being or

* "Man and Nature," p. 63. His illustration is from Thorwaldsen's cases, and seeds conveyed in them.

order of beings from original imperfection towards such perfection as it is capable of, — the advance within itself, still remaining its very self, i. e., the same being or order of beings. Development is the supposed transition of a being or order of beings out of itself into another. Evolution is the name for the principle supposed to be behind each, on which both alike are asserted to take place; the end being to reach and realize the complex through, or out from, the simple, the heterogeneous from the homogeneous. On this principle, the wing of a bird is alleged to come from the fin of a fish, or a creature having a nervous system from one having none, or a living being from one without life. Development is transformation instead of improvement. It is that which Progress is not; it is not that which Progress is. The heterogeneous, or the complex, is not in itself the more perfect,— at least not in human history, though it is fallaciously so taken here,— for we often reject it as less perfect for our purpose. It may always, not to say must, contain the less perfect: and the simple, the homogeneous, may be perfect in its kind, so far as its nature and function go, diversity not bettering it therefore in the least by any possibility. Even of a new and rude machine, we must know something more than this, that it is more complex than an old one, or we do not buy it. We judge "differentiation" in all cases by another standard than itself. Development refers to an imagined change of nature in things, — it is nothing to the purpose to say, whether it would, or would not, be a proof of Divine power, skill, or goodness. Progress refers simply to

improved activity, use of powers, or discharge of functions. A bird is not an improved fish, but a bird in place of a fish; a man is not an improved ape, but a man in place of an ape. This is true, irrespective of the origin of either. There is no bettering of the thing, as *Progress* implies, but a displacement and a substitution, — another thing in its stead.

It is supposable that all things might have been originally heterogeneous, — some more complex than others, some less, — and all subject to Progress by adequate Natural Law, each *proprio motu* in its kind and order, but none leaving its place in creation and passing over into that of another, advancing, all, yet all remaining the same. The hypothesis of Development (with its principle of Evolution to account for it), only *seems* to be a doctrine of Progress by an assumption involved, that higher species are more perfect than lower ones for the purposes of lower ones, or can only be obtained for higher purposes from lower ones, — as if a bird were more perfect for the ends of a fish than a fish itself, or a man for those of an ape, or as if these could only be got from those, — and by its fellow assumption, that the passing of the lower into the higher is, or was, *proprio motu*. I am aware that its advocates assume no foresight of greater perfection, prompting the passage of lower species into higher; but set forth the complex and heterogeneous as evolved simply for their own sake, *qua* complex and heterogeneous, i. e., blindly, no reason supposed: for complexity cannot have its reason in itself, or account for itself; and perfection

aimed at, is a reason, while complexity is a mere fact to find a reason for. In this the hypothesis is wholly mechanical and irrational.

Whether God created lower species in any realm of nature for the sake of the further production of higher ones out of them; whether man, for instance, comes altogether from one animal, as Darwin holds, or possibly from another as to his body alone, but as to his higher powers, from God, as Mivart supposes; whether it is in the Divine plan at all that orders of existence shall ever pass beyond the lines of their class and mix up in kind, as men and anthropoid apes mix in epochs of time, — is an inquiry entirely distinct from the question, whether He provides for the improvement of everything within its class, and for that of the highest of earthly creatures most. This alone touches the doctrine of Progress. The affirmative established, would furnish a Natural, but not the "Naturalistic" Law. Substitute the idea of Development for this, and it logically follows, that some diverse and superhuman form of life and power shall sometime supervene upon the human, as if an invertebrate animal or jelly should transmute itself into a vertebrate, or one sort of protoplasm into another, or cell into cell unlike, and so, by something far beyond a "new departure." Man, and the question of the Progress of Man, come to an end together!

II. In thus distinguishing from Human Progress some things that are constantly confounded with it, I must not omit to note that each has a certain and a

different relation to it. (1.) The improvement of the earth furnishes a presumption in its favor. That the conditions of the planet should be permanently elevated, and not the activities and functions of its chief inhabitant, to whom these conditions are worth most and mean everything, is incredible; that this should come to pass, indeed, save as an effect of some sort of improvement in him, is well-nigh impossible. Inventions do not altogether, or all, account for human elevation, as is imagined; some of them do not look that way, but must themselves be accounted for by man's deterioration; *many*, for instance, of those that subserve over-estimated lower uses, *all* of those that subserve vice. But many others render true progress eminently probable. That not only more land constantly is cultivated, but more in proportion to the population of the globe, and better cultivated; that the fruits of the earth in use have come up, from useless, harsh or acrid originals, to their present healthful and nutritive qualities; that one of the grasses has been improved into corn, and the flowers, God's sweet gifts, made sweeter; that the mean temperature of cities and towns is modified from that of the open country; that whole lands soften sensibly to culture, as North France, since Strabo's day, and that even Iceland, where inhabited, shows a gentler climate; that civilized men live better, on the whole, every decade; that civilization shows an increasing ascendency over rude nature, are examples at hand. "We now build our barns," says one, "better than mediæval saints and heroes built their houses."

(2.) The Development hypothesis, again, is based upon a well-known truth that supports both Laws of Progress — the Natural and the Christian — by analogy. The whole idea, in the rough, is old enough. Aristotle argued that, among animated beings, at least, there is "a scale of gradation in which they ascend from lower to higher forms," and Democritus, two hundred years before,* that creation is mere transmutation of the lower into the higher,

> "Smiles of life through nature creeping,
> Serial steps progressing ever."

Let it be that each order in creation joins on, without a break in time or kind, upon that just before and beneath it; or let the statement Hugh Miller used to make be correct, that the geologic progression is not from individual to individual, but (in both human and prehistoric ages) from class to class, by leaps, — the earliest varieties of each species being the most perfect in organism and form, though, looking through the whole order, the earliest species are ever the least perfect, or — as the Edinburgh Review once put it — "in the great divisions of the procession, the programme requires that the magnates should walk first," though there *is* a procession by divisions according to rank; let it be that gaps in the ascending series are never to be filled, to human knowledge, as

*So, traces of the fancy of spontaneous generation, are in Virgil, Lucretius and Aristotle, and Sir James Stephen tells us that a Japanese theologian maintained it in dispute with Francis Xavier, as an article of faith.

Darwin confesses the chasm between man and ape cannot now be, by any species extant or extinct, — there being sometimes no succession or no advance, — species disappearing, degeneracies occurring both in single characteristics and in classes, decay making way for growth, the chain lengthening and growing finer, but dropping certain links; and you have just such a forward movement from the Paleozoic ages, with occasional breaks and degradations, as forms a fitting analogue — whether meant so or not — to the actual progress of mankind. It must be so till the succession in nature is filled up smoothly to our knowledge, without gap or jar, — a solid continuity, something more than that "higher and immaterial connection in the Divine plan" which our great Harvard naturalist rests upon; or else until the succession itself is disproved, as it now never can be. It is against well-settled analogy, if man is a period, a full stop every way in what the Creator has been telling, if the doctrine of ascending order in creation is true in a proper sense, and that of Natural Progress in history, so correlated, is false. There is perceived capacity of indefinite increase in physical life-power along the lower line, removing life, it is thought, from the same category with material force, — why not such increase in higher powers? Even Natural Selection, so far as it goes, not always, confessedly, securing "the survival of the fittest" in lower realms, and leaving room for a higher design and energy behind itself, furnishes an analogue for rational selection in human, especially in Christian history. It is a bundle of facts and instincts. Spen-

cer's phrase, just quoted, strips it of the color of intelligence which the term "selection" implies, leaving it in a low, phenomenal sense the analogue I have indicated to that which is higher. And in respect to this, Bishop Butler's familiar statement * of the natural ascendency of reason and virtue in the world under the government of God, anticipated long ago what I am now saying. Moreover, the persistence and correlation of forces, shorn of the unproven fancy of the identity of all forces, — mechanical, chemical, vital, muscular, physical, — finds a counterpart in the grand and imperishable characteristics of the moral energies that create the march and waymarks of human society in all ages, but pre-eminently since Christ.

III. We are now to determine and limit the word "Law," in the phrases "Natural Law" and "Christian Law," and herein we shall chiefly find the basis of adjustment between the two. Certain other great confusions of thought meet us here at the threshold. The Doctrine of Progress,— taking for a moment the larger and looser term than even Law,— may mean (1) a prevailing or constant course of fact; or (2) it may mean the method, *modus operandi*,— not the ruling facts, but the rule of the facts,— the rationale,

*"It may require to be more particularly considered, that power in a society by being under the direction of virtue, naturally increases, and has a necessary tendency to prevail over opposite power, not under the direction of it; in like manner as power, by being under the direction of reason, increases, and has a tendency to prevail over brute force." [But. Anal. Part I., Chap. III., V. — p. 95 seq. Compl. Works, Carter's Ed. 1842.]

or principle of order, according to which they occur; or (3) it may mean the force that produces them, the power that makes them facts.* The Doctrine as a whole, be it Natural or Christian, means and affirms all three. In proving it, all three must be proven. And the word "Law" is used in these days for all three. And either term also, Doctrine or Law, for either of the three. Fact, rule or method, and force, are every hour mistaken for each other by men who ought to think more accurately.

When we say that it is the law of a certain thing to show certain phenomena, we are thinking only of constant or prevailing facts. When we speak of the law of the thing operating to such results or phenomena, we mean far more than the facts, the force in the thing that makes the facts apparent. But when we affirm that the law is that these phenomena shall occur, or the force act, thus or so, our language points to something different from both, a method, rationale or principle of order.

A few illustrations will set this distinction in clear

* The word "rule" is sometimes used, aside from its proper sense, for prevailing fact, as opposed to exception. The analysis above differs from that of the Duke of Argyle ("Reign of Law," pp. 64, 65, Fifth Lond. Ed.), but a little examination will show that his second, third and fourth "secondary senses" can be reduced to one, and coincide with (3) above, and that the first in both analyses coincide; while his fifth sense, "abstract conceptions of the mind, deduced from the phenomena as axioms of thought necessary to our understanding of them,"—or, "an order of thought,"—is at bottom the same with (2) here given. I should not answer, however, "the three great questions which Science asks of Nature,—the What, the How, and the Why,"—as he does. How? is a question of method, not of cause. Why? is the question of producing force. The question of purpose or intention is, Wherefore?

light. The word "gravitation," properly describes constant terrestrial facts; viz., that bodies of matter disengaged in position move from rest towards the earth's centre. To name attraction, is to name a force to which every such fact is ascribed. To say that bodies have such a tendency, is to say that such a force permanently resides in them. A molecule or an atom gives you the same distinction between fact and force as any body of matter. But a statement of the manner, proportion, or intensity, in certain circumstances with which this force acts,— involving relations of space, time, quantity of matter, and velocity,— is a rule, rationale, or principle of order. For example, that attraction acts in direct proportion to the quantity of matter and in inverse proportion to the square of the distance. A rule is behind the facts, and a force, like attraction, is behind the rule or rules. A sentence from Newton* will show how he recognized this distinction. "*Gravity* must be caused by an *agent* acting constantly according to certain *laws*."

Apply the doctrine of gravitation to the universe, or to a molecule, and you carry the same distinction of fact, rule, and force. Again, the simplest form of motion implies an impulse imparted, a method of proceeding: viz., in the same direction with the impulse, and then the fact of change of position in space.

Molecular attraction, motion, force, must needs have methods or rules, as well as effects, else no fore-

* Third letter to Bentley.

seen constancy in the effects, and no calculable action possible in respect to molecule, matter, or body. Also, if heat is a mode of motion, then behind the phenomena is the same force, and the laws of motion as well. We are taught in mechanics that the result of compound or coefficient forces has also its rational rules. We are never to confound these three with each other. Take an elliptical orbit in the starry heavens as a constant fact, and Astronomy will tell not only of the component forces, centripetal and centrifugal, but of the laws of sidereal motion, that is, the rules of these forces. If inertia is due to the equilibrium of forces, any explanation that comes between the fact and the forces,— the How that can be rationally placed between the What and the Why, — is a law. When a new set of facts, like those of electricity, gives us a new force, the understanding of the laws of its action is of more moment to the philosopher and to the practical man alike, than all the facts, even if they could know them all. In Chemistry, the strong, mutual affinity of certain substances, the atomic proportions in which they combine, and the compounds they consequently form, are respectively force, law, and fact. "Life adds a new and higher force to Chemistry," says Dr. Stirling, and at once come in vital laws, and vital facts resulting. If, as Comte imagined, we could reduce all sorts of phenomena, — or facts apparent, — to the single law of atomic action, we should have behind both phenomena and law, atomic force. It is not necessary to a law, however, in the sense of fact, rule or force, that it should be measurable by mathe-

matics,* or capable of expression in the formulæ of any branch of that science. Even in Chemistry, these formulæ sometimes fail; the higher analyses foil or elude them.† And the intellectual and moral energies in human history, or psychical powers in action, must of necessity always evade expression. In the proper sense of law, they are immeasurable by such formulæ.

Neither the word "law," however, nor the word "rule," is used here in its proper or primary sense. Both are moral in their origin, not physical. They are used in physics, necessarily, in a transferred and improper sense. Let me put together here three definitions of three eminent men. "Law, in its most general and comprehensive sense," says Blackstone, "signifies a rule of action, prescribed by some superior, and which the inferior is bound to obey."

"Law," says Dr. N. W. Taylor, "differs widely from wholesome counsel or good advice; and one of its essential characteristics is, that it is a rule of action, determining what ought to be done. Without this conception of a rule of action, that of law cannot be formed." "In its primary signification," says the Duke of Argyle, "a 'law' is the authoritative expression of human Will enforced by Power."

* See Pres. F. P. Barnard's Address to the Amer. Assoc. Adv. Science, 1869 (Proceedings, pp. 93-101), where the alleged interchangeability of thought-power and physical force is admirably refuted. For convenience and brevity, I use the word "force" throughout this lecture for *power in action.*

† When the attempt is made to put a complex reaction into numerical symbols, the equations are apt to express either more than we know or less." [Qual. Chem. Anal. by Pres. Eliot and Prof. Storer, Int. p. 10.]

These definitions contemplate both the sources and the subjects of Law; their common elements are an intelligent mandate requiring compliance, and intelligently received; an expression of mind, addressed to mind, to be understood,* considered, and decided upon. Action corresponding thereto, forms no part of the original and true idea of law; the requirement and the authority with which it is required, are all; force compelling action is expressly excluded. But in physics, on the contrary, action, under pressure of force, is in the very idea of law, and the original moral or governmental meaning, is altogether excluded. The sense is entirely changed and new. The two uses of the word have really nothing in common, or if anything, only an implication that there lies behind each some source, whether it be of action or of a rule of action.

Contrast, now, with these well-settled definitions, that of Herbert Spencer. Law is "uniformity of relations among phenomena"! Now, phenomena are mere facts, not rules; and uniformity is a mere fact, not a rule. Spencer attempts here to confine law to the one meaning of constant facts. The uniformity, however, may be accidental, so far as reason can see, if that is all; and it *is* all. But only uniformity of relations between fact and force, through

* When Blackstone says that the "most general and comprehensive sense" is "applied indiscriminately to all kinds of actions animate, or *inanimate*, rational or *irrational*," he does not show discrimination as on other points, or perhaps shows that his age had not learned some very simple and clear distinctions. Can a "rule be prescribed for an inanimate, irrational object, as for a rational, animate one? Is the former, in any proper, intelligible sense, *bound* to *obey*?

some intelligible principle of order, *i. e.*, only rational relations, can make more than accident, or give uniformity the meaning of law at all. We can know fact indeed, phenomenal or not, respecting a thing or class of things without discovering the rationale, method, or principle of order through which it becomes fact; but we cannot escape thinking an adequate force exists. A single physical fact demands force to account for it, though *such* a fact, sporadic, would not suggest a method, or principle of necessity, *i. e.*, a law *in the sense nearest to* its primitive meaning. For it involves no established rule, as its frequent recurrence would. Invariably recurring fact, however, is not indispensable to the suggestion of such a rule; prevailing or general fact is sufficient. So fact goes before law and force in thought; but force, before law and fact in things. Force cannot belong to phenomena, or to relations of phenomena; to events, or to the method of events; but only to existence. Fact, is matter of observation. Law, is matter of judgment. Force, is matter of intuition. We state the first in a definition, the second in a formula, the third in a description. We reach the intuition ever and only, in the experience of adequate force, *i. e.*, cause properly so called, force producing facts; but the notion of power involved in it once reached, has validity to the mind independently of facts or laws. Constant facts imply constant forces and constant methods, else they are constant accidents, which is a contradiction in terms and in thought. Change of fact follows change of force, and, if permanent, under some principle or

rule. Abolish forces, and facts and methods or rules are abolished at the same stroke.

Now, of these three terms, thus distinguished and illustrated, the two extremes, fact and force, are seldom directly compounded, but the middle term, which comes nearest to the true meaning of law, is incessantly compounded, in speech and thought, with the other two. The universal or even general fact concerning a thing or class of things, is called its law, and so is the force that causes it; or, what is the same thing, its law, rule, method is said to cause it. And thus, through the departure from the meaning of the middle term, the other two, so utterly distinct, are blended, or the word "law" is used to cover all three.

IV. In recognizing, then, a Natural Law of Progress, I recognize that the Doctrine of Natural Progress includes more than is properly called, Law, viz.: (1)a body of facts; (2)rules, methods, principles; and (3)a force, or power in action; and that these are confused in what is called Natural Law. It is needful to establish each distinctively.

(1.) Of the facts. I may decline to enumerate these, as is often attempted, since justly to represent them would require a library of statements. Nor is it necessary even to exemplify largely; the facts are patent; they are ever on the tongue of the nineteenth century.

The accumulations of all secular science "according to the law of compound interest," as Sir William Thompson said the other day from the chair of the

British Association, the decline of a vice like intemperance in such bodies as the English House of Commons and the Congress of the United States, according to the testimony of the Right Hon. John Bright and the Hon. Henry Wilson, are instances of improvement. The low social conditions of former days, pictured by Mr. Hallam in the ninth chapter of his "Middle Ages" and by Lord Macaulay in the third chapter of his "History of England," contrasting as they do, with those of our own day,— and, indeed, the mere fact that such books as our histories of civilization and philosophies of history are possible, are illustrations on a still broader scale of the grand progress of mankind. The arts of modern life, their perfection and their multiplication, will occur to every one as other examples; notwithstanding the fact that some of them are evidences of temporary, partial, or local decline. In the more advanced nations they lap over here and there upon uncivilized countries, and show, in this, a native and divinely appointed tendency. That the material good which society achieves and the rights once granted only to individuals or classes, extend to the people at large ere long; that exchanges grow easier and wider, and franchises more common; that inequalities of privilege, facility, and achievement become less each century; that the under side of society steadily though slowly rises; that in property, liberty, and social privilege the equalization among men, is ever going on,— these things are evidence in favor of the beautiful belief, that —

"Ever through the ages one unceasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are induced by the process of the suns."

"Lost arts" do not disprove it; they were less for the general welfare than modern ones, as well as less intellectual. And in most respects we have found better ones than we have lost. Were it clear that the Hanging Gardens of Babylon implied a force and skill beyond those required by either of our Pacific railroads, the public utility, besides the genius involved in the modern work, would place it immeasurably in advance of the ancient. The labor engineered in building the Pyramids sinks beside that of the great enterprises of our day.* And when a recent art like that of making glass, turns up, to our surprise, at Pompeii, it simply shows that the ancients were even with us in one thing, but not on the whole or in most. When a writer of our own day like Froude,† declares that "the level of comfort in the families of the laboring millions, has in this country been rather declining than rising. The important results have been so far, rather political and social"; he writes truly of his own country, but not of ours; he admits political and social progress, and he discloses the fact, that lower progress in a people often waits long upon that which is higher. Often, on the other hand, lower improvement liberates powers that arrest decay, and removes conditions that prevent the higher improvement. A single convenience created or universally distributed, comes in this way to have immeasurably more meaning than it has in itself.

2. Of the methods, rules, rationale, or law of the

* See Stephenson.

† Short Studies, 2d series, pp. 245–279, "On Progress."

facts. We want besides these facts, some principle or principles of order according to which they occur. Our knowledge of them must always be fragmentary; and we seek, in addition, some ground of conviction that they belong to an established plan, some security for them in some order of thought and life with which they tally. Of course they prove, in themselves the natural possibility of progress; for nothing occurs which is not possible; — and so prove it, that historic examples of decline, and ever so many of them, can never disprove it. They show a real capacity in man, against which the worst that can be said is, that it is a capacity at times interfered with. Nothing but *universal* degeneracy in all things could show the opposite. That the balance may not, however, yet turn against man fatally and forever, depends not on facts, but on laws and powers. Herbert Spencer comes forward with a law, derived from Von Baer,* which, it is claimed, will explain and assure Progress, as well as what is called Development. It is the law of evolution, or the constant, universal transformation of the simple into the complex, the homogeneous into the heterogeneous. Is this, if it be true, a rationale or rule at all? does it rise above the realm of fact? Plainly, not. The question of its truth is a question of fact. And it is not entirely unquestionable even as fact. Mr. Spencer himself shows that Science proceeds both ways, sometimes moving from the complex to the simple.† Henri Taine, the art critic of the school

* After Wolff and Harvey. [See Spencer's Recent Discussions, p. 134.]

† Rec. Disc. pp. 181, 182.

to which Darwin, Huxley, Buckle, Draper, Bain, Lewis, Maudsley, and Spencer belong, says that the art of the Greeks perfected itself in its simplicity, and that we of to-day must find our models there, because "the simplicity of their culture kept them within a circle beyond which the complexity of our culture has impelled us."* And Max Muller shows that from the simple to the complex in religion is just the process of corruption.† I have already pointed out how Spencer confounds evolution as fact, with improvement, which is quite a distinct thing.

We ask, then, for the reason or rule of evolution, since it is not itself either. If it contains none it is no rationale or Law of Progress. How, then, does Progress come? Thus, answers Mr. Spencer,— "Every active force produces more than one change; every cause produces more than one effect." He calls this the law of differentiation; the law of the law of evolution, confounding, however, law and force (or cause) together, for behind law in the proper sense here the next thing of course, is cause. "I will tell you the *cause*," he says, "of the evolution of the complex from the simple, the more perfect from the less perfect; it is that the *cause* (whatever it be) produces a number of effects." There are two senses here, perhaps, of the word "cause," but is all this, either cause, or law, or merely another constant fact; a phenomena of cause, or force in action?

* Taine, Art in Greece, Amer. Ed. p. 40. Froude maintains that English life was simpler of yore, and therefore now degenerate.— *Short Studies.*

† Science of Language, 2d Series, pp. 442, 443.

Plainly, nothing more. According to Mr. Spencer, and all his school, moreover, we know nothing but phenomena or facts apparent. If he is telling us anything he knows, then, he is describing a mere phenomenon! But why, again, is the number of effects differentiated? They are not in themselves different because plural. There might be more than one from one cause, yet all of the same kind. And why does this differentiation, which is not itself improvement, result in improvement? Among the multiplex changes produced, if differentiated in some way for which we have yet no rule or reason, may be inferior ones as well as superior, the worst as well as the best, and these may be perpetuated as well as the others. They may be the strongest. So it often happens; the poorest of seeds are quickened as well as the finest, and

> "The evil that men do, lives after them,
> The good is oft interred with their bones."

In consequence of this logical gap in his hypothesis of evolution, Mr. Spencer feels the need of supplementing it with that of Natural Selection; but when he changes the name of this to "Survival of the Fittest,"—to exclude all color of intelligence, and reduce it to mere blind fact, without a rational element,—he does not rid it of the patent confession that the causes at work in history, both "natural" and human, produce the unfittest as well as the fittest. We ask again, how is it that among human products the fittest are selected to survive? He has no answer, though Bishop Butler had one

long ago. He knows no reason of things, no rational method even, nothing but phenomena and phenomenal method. In later publications,* he confesses the insufficiency of mere differentiation, and adds, — as a new law of the law, — "the evolution of the definite from the indefinite," a very indefinite evolution! which is, at best, only specific differentiation, and which yields no solution whatever, but only complicates the question, adding to the mesh of elements, and giving us more to solve after a method that solves nothing. We still ask, *Why* is the movement of man in history, as asserted, from the indefinite to the definite?— the former being the imperfect, or an element of it, the latter of the perfect. Why does man proceed in that direction? Our philosopher has no answer. So much for what is plainly no law, in a correct sense or an incorrect. What is the law? I can best answer after showing what is the force. For method and rationale are always the method and rationale of force.

3. Of the cause of Progress, or the force in action. If this famous doctrine, — which is the chief support of current error, and gives us a Naturalistic instead of a Natural Law or a Christian one, — discloses the true cause, or any cause at all, it is to be found in what is already before us. Evolution or differentiation, or some supplement to these must contain it. But the whole idea of development, whatever its metaphysical supports, even as worked

* Appleton's last editions.

out in respect to the origination of species, is obviously, at the utmost, only an idea of method, leaving the question — the method of what? unanswered. This is why there is cogency in the criticism of Martineau, Mivart, and the Christian respondents in foreign and American reviews, that the theory rationally requires, and cannot exclude the agency of God. As Dr. Stirling says of the vitality of protoplasm, "explain it as we may, we shall never explain it by molecules." So I affirm of Progress; explain it as we may, we shall never explain it by evolution. For that cannot possibly be an explanation which yields no first origin or cause for what it assumes to explain. Mr. Spencer calls evolution "an empirical generalization," and differentiation a "rational" one, — both being evidently mere phenomenal methods and one as empirical, or as truly known only as phenomenon, as the other, — just as if one generalization produced another, and that which has been generalized also. It is much as if we should ask for the forces that produce a very peculiar man's character, and should be told, "it is the general man in him"; or, as if one should ask for the cause of such institutions as Harvard College "empirically generalized," and be told "it is the American college rationally generalized!" Even suppose evolution to be the method by which the complex, the definite, and the fittest appear in the history of God's world, in every department, *and survive*, it is manifestly no adequate force, or cause, i. e., power in action. It yields simply a supposition how some unnamed power in action works when it does work. We have got no true

laws from the pretentious and empty generalizations of Spencer, — so readily does this noted scheme crumble at the touch of analysis, — we shall get no cause from confounding supposed laws with force, as if they were themselves dynamic and adequate. We must look elsewhere to understand Human Progress at all.

V. And now, using the term "Law" in the more exact sense which has been extricated from the prevailing confusion of speech and thought, and treating together on the positive side what cannot well be kept entirely separate, I deem it idle to look anywhere but to the well-established laws of human nature for any Law of Progress. These are its natural laws. The producing force may be one, certainly is one; but there is no one Law, there must be many. No fact that can be cited is to be referred to one alone. Many blend in every form and phase of human advancement; no one can tell how many. There are no laws of human nature but may be employed in it, — each in improvement of each kind, — those of the body in that which is physical, those of the intellect in that which is intellectual, the social laws in that which is social, the moral and spiritual laws in that which is moral and spiritual. The Divine mechanism of the soul is sufficient — under guidance — for all the secular improvements we see, and possesses powers, even in the savage state, as Mr. Wallace has shown,* which are unnecessary and

* *Contra* Darwin.

less there, and predict a better state. Even in barbarism, man is capable of aversion to it.† Nor could any kind of improvement possibly take place without these natural laws of mind. The rationale or method of each is peculiar to each. Their name is legion. Progress itself is not one, but many. Man's wants, notions, motives, intelligent choices, have a part in every species of it, at every step; even imagination and association have their place and play their part, but much more the natural faculty of belief; and it is idle to attempt to set them aside and put instead an abstract and high-sounding generalization about the way in which force acts as force. We can generalize a little. Progress, in the main, can be referred to human knowing, human feeling, and human doing. It is a law of knowing, that one discovery opens the path for another; the discoverer is brought into a position to make another, and has individual methods for each of his faculties — among which those of logic are most important — by which proceeding he legitimately and naturally makes further discovery, or others following him make it. This is the way in which Sir William Thompson's affirmation respecting the accumulations of science is true. It is a law again of feeling that it produces feeling; every type of sensibility humane, æsthetic, ethical, builds development upon development, expression upon expression, throb upon throb, impulse upon impulse. It is a law of doing, also, that what is once done can be easier and better done and something besides, never done before; facility thus is acquired for completer as

† Pere Mailla in "New Englander" for Jan., p. 73.

well as more finished action. Such laws of discovery, sensibility, habit, are simply modes of the working of powers, belonging to something; and force, cause, is always power. Facts are never governed by mere laws, as the Naturalistic school teach people to say,—they are governed by powers alone. Laws are simply stated methods, in which powers act and govern. As the laws of language and the laws of science alike are only the laws of mind, so of Progress. It is natural to spirit, it is the original gift of God, to seek improvement.

"This sacred hunger marks th' immortal mind."

God seeks it also, but not His own, which is impossible.

We find the cause of all Progress, then, in mind alone, as we find its laws in the laws of mind alone. So far as we know, Progress is natural to nothing beside. Mr. Spencer's whole philosophy is an ambitious and stupendous attempt to explain the universe without aught but the forces of matter, without recourse to mind or God. Spirit, which we all know best, is to him, indeed, unknowable. It is by the law of parsimony that the architectonic principle of Progress must needs be thought as one, while the laws of it must be thought as many. Therefore, there may be Progress in one department and none in another, as we see there is. Spirit embraces free choice, which may, in fact, reverse Progress at times, as we see it does. If differentiation in the abstract were the cause, or an adequate force, it would give us invariable results which we nowhere have. If matter were the

cause, if all improvements were traceable to a "physical basis," then it would follow that it did not require mind to originate what, when originated, it requires mind to comprehend; which is to do much less. It took more than the simia in Darwin to think out "The Origin of Species." It required the simia *plus* Darwin; and you must add Huxley to protoplasm, to get protoplasm even conceived of; while it must have taken infinitely more mind still, to produce Huxley and Darwin, and Adam, out of nothing, or out of anything. Such and such differentiations arose *somehow* (this is the unsolved problem of the solution), in the nebulous primeval matter,—so say these philosophers,*—in the molten planets, in the substance of the earth, in the structure of plants, of animals, of man, and the explanation which they can not or will not give, we supply in one word, GOD. Differentiations also arose *somehow* in governments, manners, societies, natural religions, labor, language, arts, sciences; and the explanation so carefully suppressed here is MIND. It is like God, and therefore cause. There is nothing dynamic in any of its laws or methods; the true δύναμις is in mind itself. All secular Progress is at once both its movement and its monument. For natural or supernatural, all improvement must be; that of secular human history is only supernatural, if you choose to call mind supernatural.

* Since this lecture was delivered, a passage in Dr. Shedd's History of Christian Doctrine has come to my notice, in which the distinction between development and improvement is recognized. Vol. I., pp. 15-18. In his own use of the word "development" (historical instead of scientific), it is, however, "synonymous with corruption and decline, as well as with improvement." Progress is not.

I mean mind here, of course, as dowered and prepared of God for Progress, and especially as possessed of certain intuitions and impulses. Those of order and fitness have their sphere, but that of perfection is the commanding one. Every great form of human action is presided over by one of these royal and inspiring intuitions, as, of justice in the realm of society and government, beauty in that of taste and art, right in that of morals and religion; but perfection reigns over them all. Each is more than an idea, it is an intuition and an impulse; it has its realm in the thoughts and also in the active powers. No generalization from experience, *external or internal*, ever gave us the idea of perfection, for it could not be generalized from the imperfect; no observed or conscious achievement of the imperfect ever gave us the prompting to attempt the perfect in anything. It is only as standards or models in thought and expression, in act and character, touch (they cannot do more) the Divinely provided and primary notion of the perfect, in man's soul, that they stimulate it to strenuous and successful imitation. It is only as they disclose that they fall below it, that his own grand and ever unattained ideal moves man to emulate them. He has a *tendency* to advance, because he has a tendency to realize his ideals. Without that, all his achievements and even his short-comings were inexplicable and impossible as such; not even the theory of their supernatural origin would work.

And I mean mind, moreover, as placed, circumstanced, and governed of God; its intuitions, im-

pulses, and laws freely working, and yet within the natural limits of His restriction, correction, stimulation, and overruling. In its main direction, society neither drifts nor is driven; it is guided. Up to a certain point the analogy between creation and human history, a movement onward and upward in both, is bright and clear. The differences between changing flora and fauna become greater with each descending stage of time; and something like this is discernible in the successive stages of civilization. Whether barbarians can raise themselves out of barbarism at all or not, the analogy may hold. "The first step is the difficulty," says Archbishop Whatley, arguing that they cannot.* But however the difficulty was surmounted, mind must have been in itself not less at first than it is now, nor less brooded over by God. "It seems probable," says the last volume of "Smithsonian Contributions," "that the progress of mankind was greater in degree, and in the extent of its range in the ages of barbarism, than it has been since in the ages of civilization, and that it was a harder, more doubtful, and more intense struggle to reach the threshold of the latter, than it has been since to reach its present status." The instinct of perfection, then, the moral impulses, the help of God which joins on to these, must have been as great and as clear to man in the beginning as to-day. The only Natural Law of Progress which we affirm, is God's Law, — fact, rule, and force, all emanate at last from Him. Both this world and man have their pre-con-

*London Y. M. Chr. Assoc. Lect. 1855, "On the Origin of Civilization."

formation to improvement — the one active, the other passive, — from His hand. Even savage tribes attempt to perfect something, handiwork at least, though not all the same. They show the inchoate and partial working of a natural law. To be without this would be more than to be without culture and integrity; viz., to be without a human nature imaging God's at all. I take this to be the meaning of Dr. McCosh, when he says that "our advancement in knowledge and refinement is evidently pre-determined by God, for it is probably the result of agencies which He has instituted." It is clearly the thought of Bishop Butler, — "This much is manifest, that the whole *natural* world and government of it is a scheme or system, not a fixed, but a progressive one, — a scheme, the operation of which takes up a great length of time before the ends they tend to can be attained." Even Archbishop Whately, arguing that man never originated civilization, affirms that "the tendency towards progressive improvement" is "characteristic of our species." "Human society," he says, "may be compared to some combustible substances which will never take fire spontaneously, but when once sent on fire, will burn with continually *increasing* strength. A community of men requires, as it were, to be kindled, but requires no more." "There is no art that man may not have invented, supposing him to have a certain degree of mental cultivation to start from."

VI. It may now be assumed, that the Natural Law of Progress, which is divine, is clearly estab-

lished, and it only needs that the Christian Law be truly and accurately stated, in order to an easy adjustment between them. There is little here to be done, because of the convincing manner in which the Christian Law has been maintained here in former years, by the first lecturer of 1870 and the last of 1871. Fact, rule, and force, have been established, and I have only to point out what is peculiar to each as Christian.

But one word, first, on the question. Why is there a *Christian* Law of Progress at all? Simply for this one reason, that the Natural Law does not work, morally and spiritually. Nothing is plainer in the natural history of mankind, than that the improvement it shows elsewhere does not obtain in ethics and religion, aside from Christianity. Mr. Buckle's much-contested axiom, that morals are stationary, is true enough as natural fact alone, and hardly need have been so disputed; but it is not true as Christian fact. All races go far enough on this side, to prove that they have a moral nature and have the same. Exactly the reverse of what Whately maintains on the secular side is here true; they have something to start from, but no tendency, to use Lord Bacon's phrase, "then to make progression." One word, one phenomenon, explains the ethico-spiritual paralysis of the great Law of Progress, — Sin. Without sin, improvement on that side, instead of being last and least, would have been as obvious as any other.

"The *one* obstacle that comes between man and his end," said Dr. Hopkins last year, "is Sin." Hence a new Law, with new and unique results. We were

made originally under one Law, Divinely intended to be both secular and religious; and just as plainly as we see that it still works on the one side, we see that it does not, save as exceptionally replaced, on the other. Christianity itself silently recognizes its working in secular things, for it does not propose to reinstate it there, else would it be science, art, and all beside, as well as religion. It equally recognizes that the Law has been overthrown in our spiritual nature, by undertaking *so* to re-establish it there, that it may be said truly: "the *righteous* shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands, grow stronger and stronger"; "the path of the *just* is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

(1.) And now as to the peculiar facts of Christian Progress. New and beautiful forms of virtue have been created by the Gospel. "Toleration," says the "Westminster Review," denying Buckle's axiom, "is the result of something else than mere scepticism, and is a modern idea." "Humanity," says Max Muller, "is a word you look for in vain in Plato or Aristotle, an idea of Christian growth, and the science of Mankind is a science which, without Christianity, would never have sprung into life." Mr. Froude mentions the disinterested disposition which devotion to science produces, valuing knowledge for its own sake, and asking no reward, as "the only real and undeniable progress" that we are making through science; but this is only the shadow of a whole new character supremely consecrate to truth, love, and goodness, which the work of Christ's religion dis-

closes. Or, descending to common facts, Christian experience is an incontestable and patent fact, which not even a Comte could deny, in a community like that of Boston, without risking his reputation for either honesty or sanity; and Christian believing, which must be either part of it or root of it, and Christian living, which is fruit of both, are also facts, and all three facts, no matter what becomes of Positivism, to be accounted for by some law and some power in action. It would require exemplary hardihood to deny that a statement like that of our learned fellow-countryman, Dr. Henry B. Smith, to the Evangelical Alliance at Berlin, of the growth of Protestant Christianity in the world, involves a signal increase of common Christian morality, to say nothing of the higher and finer virtues. So of the statement, — which I am not able to verify, — that our increase of population in the first fifty years of this century was four-and-a-half-fold, while that of Christian persons was nine-fold. "The Christian church throughout the world," said the "Westminster Review," last April, "was never in so advanced and favorable a condition, and never embraced so many elements of hope, as at present."

(2.) Of the rule involved in Christian Progress; the principles of order or method. If the laws of human nature are employed, they clearly are not used in the ordinary way. The new facts imply both new processes and new ends. Christian experience is in some sense a supernatural fact, and it is illogical not to recognize supernatural methods behind it. In it, the laws of human nature, which had been under

paralysis, are made to work as they never would by nature. We have still the ideal of the perfect, though never spiritually employed; we have all the intuitions of natural reason, and the accelerating facility of habit; else no leverage, no basis of operations. The capacity for improvement is no part of that image of God that was lost in the Fall, for God is not improvable. Mind and moral distinctions must have been from the first, as now, in order to progress on any supposition, by evolution, by primitive revelation or by natural law. The Remedial System is itself proof that there is somewhat in us yet for Progress to hold by, else why sermons in *any* pulpit, "to the Natural Man?" It is part of the evidence of a grand original intention, thwarted now in spiritual things, whose failure therefore, has to be remedied. "A true theology is necessary to all spiritual improvement at least; and it implies natural faculties, for the discovery and recognition of religious truth, but faculties, that under sin, must be cleansed and quickened and illuminated. "Holiness to the Lord," is no word of mere ethics. "Perfect in the will of God," is never the aim of natural civilization. There are new truths required and disclosed here, in which is the starting point of the new advance of mankind, for with them is the beginning of goodness toward God, and there cannot be a better, until there is first a good. The old selfish, utilitarian uses of even first principles are, under the Christian Law, superseded. Good acquires another and a higher meaning; even right is another thing under revelation. And with this new furniture

of ideas and aims, all the mental laws work in other and higher channels than before.

(3.) Of the force involved. It is the Spirit of God, as in the Natural Law of Progress it is the mind of man. The principle of parsimony here again admits but one force or power in action; it must be mind, and it cannot be human. Then, logically, it is God. Or, if you say Christ, that is logically the same thing. "Between man and his end, sin intervenes,— that only," said Dr. Hopkins. The religion which begins, proceeds, and concludes with the removal of sin, and that sets up an ideal of perfection in goodness which neither philosophy nor religion ever shadowed or hinted before, must be Divine. To improve one's mere condition may be selfish: to improve one's character in disinterested righteousness, is itself disinterested. It must be the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which can make either the individual or society free from the law of sin and death. Social enthusiasms, in other civilizations, can be ascribed to Natural Law, like that for "wisdom" among caste-Egyptians, for art or philosophy among certain Greeks, for civil-service qualifications among the Chinese; but not a social enthusiasm for holiness, such as emerges alone in Christian civilization.

Such is the Christian Law of Progress,— its facts peculiar, its methods peculiar, its force peculiar. Mere secular, *i. e.*, partial progress, under the Natural Law, necessitates it. That is supplemented, not superseded by this. Progress is both qualitative, — as to what sort of capabilities in us are improving, and quantitative,— as to how many. Man may be

rising in some directions, and yet sinking in only one that is more important; he may be sinking on the whole, his apparent elevation being not really such, any more than that of a body immersed in water, turning upward as it goes down. The Natural Law, however, does not require, as the Naturalistic does, that Progress should be proven of every epoch, of every nation, of every man. The race advances, as armies sometimes do, through an enemy's country, by sections; first one division or brigade or regiment, and then another. Nor is it necessary, under Natural or Christian Law, to prove that every movement is in itself an advance, for many must have for their immediate object only to gain position, as armies do by flank on battle-fields, or ships by tack at sea. But if most things progress, provided they be the highest, all will, ere long. Yet, neither *kind* of improvement, secular nor spiritual, can take the place of the other, or fail to languish alone. The secular dies, dissevered from the spiritual; and upward religious movements, separated from thought and culture, lapse into barbarism, and illustrate the truth that there is dead weight enough in barbarism to sink and destroy them. We need both Laws. And as partial Progress must always be lower Progress, the new and supplementary Law must be a higher one for the higher nature. Omnipotent in its own domain, improvement in the man or the masses, can never be complete without it. For he and they whose civilization is not spiritual, must have a spiritual nature uncivilized. As morals cannot produce taste, or taste morals, or culture

unselfish love, so neither, nor anything beside, can produce religious virtue, which is necessary not only to a perfect being, but to a truly exalted specimen of an imperfect one. Giving all other agencies their due place, of our Religion we sing

> "If thou take thy grace away,
> Nothing pure in us shall stay."

But Christianity cannot be required to abolish all wrong at any one place or time, — for it takes effect on human character, not on human nature, — or to give us a perfect generation of men; for each generation has to begin with the rudiments in morals, as with the alphabet in learning, and this under a heritage of sin; while the outrages of Communists and the "Ku Klux," private assassinations in our cities, and the daily record of violence and treachery, prove man's nature still depraved. But Christianity has already made some crimes and sins unknown; and age by age — for this is slow work,— is doing away with others. The signs, every day multiplying, of its becoming the universal morality and religion, are simply signs that Progress will some day reach high-water mark on the shores of time.

VII. And here, to draw the lines of adjustment closer, observe, that the first fruit of Christianity in society is not a civilization, but a righteousness, growing out of a new principle of personal holiness. I object strongly to the wide and inaccurate sense in which the phrase "Christian civilization" is used.

Nothing is correctly classified under it which is not the fruit of Christian righteousness. Also observe that this righteousness always and everywhere naturally produces a civilization, though no civilization, not even the Jewish, has ever yet naturally produced a Christianity; and yet that was the purest civilization in history, and really religious; though, as has been said of morality, only the fruit on the lower branches of the Christian tree.

Implant the new spiritual ideal in man, and it will awaken all other ideals in him. It will revive the Natural Law of Progress in whatsoever it has been suspended. The fountain of "sweetness and light," of strength and beauty, it is both complement and ally of all other good agencies, doing for men what they cannot do, setting them all upon the doing of what they can. Again observe, — and this is a relation of Christianity to secular Progress ever overlooked, — it helps all other agencies, by restraining as well as by stimulating them, by guiding them away from over-action and excess, by fastening upon the refinements and enjoyments of all culture the clog of wholesome self-denial, by severely repressing whatever would overlay and crush its own high ends, and spoil culture itself, by preventing, — to use a Western, Home-Missionary patriarch's curt phrase, — our being "civilized to death." It does more for the commonwealth, to touch the name etymologically, by checking the passion for wealth, than unrestrained avarice ever could. It saves civilization itself from growing thin, and strengthless; it keeps the stamen good. There is no element of natural well-

being or character to which a restraining hand is not indispensable, and there can be none like that of a Divinely-communicated, remedial, merciful religion. If mere civilization is not to run out and become effete on its own line, it must have both spur and check. How far Christianity may go in this direction, of secular benefit, no man can tell; but neither any other religion nor atheism goes in this direction at all; and we may say, with reverence, that a true religion would have the marks of just such an influence upon the course of secular things as are shown by Christianity alone. It has already gone so far that in Christendom it is impossible entirely to extricate the workings of its own Law and those of the Law of Nature from each other; and, while analysis should give us two distinct classes of resulting facts, there is a third in which the two blend inextricably, which is — beyond statement, — larger than either. And once more observe, that though itself, in its substance, not a subject of improvement, but complete,—yet it is the most progressive religion in its unfolding to, and application by man, of all the ages. In this respect, as in prophecy, it has "a springing and germinant fulfilment." In these things, also, is the secret of the notable fact, that nothing beside can so support, complete, perpetuate or resuscitate civilization. It can arrest mortal decay, which nothing else can; it alone has the power of resurrection after death. All unchristian improvement, being partial, is therefore temporary. The lower faculties can be kept up to their highest mark — even reason itself, only provided the uppermost ones, which are the

spiritual, are quickened and set forward. Those hang upon these. For, if perfection could exist alone in anything, it could not long, without perfection of *character;* and this must sustain lower progress while it is reaching perfection, if it ever can. And so necessary is Christianity to give direction and proportion to Progress, that unless it is subordinating all else to those elements in man which are highest and grandest, such Progress, whether begun by accident, by genius, by selfishness, or by science, is doomed first to stagnate, then to rot, and then to disappear, and the race with it. In what has just been said lies also the secret of the familiar fact that missions preceding other civilizing agencies in heathen lands are always more powerful and successful civilizers than they.

VIII. This adjustment between the two Laws has been shapen expressly and equally to avoid, on the one hand, the speculative theories which resolve all Progress into material necessity — dissipating all rationale and all cause into thin air, and leaving mere physical fact; and, at the other extreme, those dogmatic theories which deny any Natural Law, and that there is any Progress save through Christianity. Dr. Lord held this last in its most obnoxious and untenable form; viz., that the earth itself has a broken constitution; all things upon it are disordered, subject to decline and dissolution—particularly man and the animated creatures nearest in order to him — "and there are no exceptions"; and that God's dealings with all races and ages, our own included, have

been "strictly and universally in accordance with the law of decline and fall." But as he also held that, under Christianity, temporary improvements may take place, it is difficult to see how any other supposition of an exclusively supernatural law differs from his, save in the connected interpretations of prophecy. In any form, it lands its champions in a ludicrous self-contradiction, in that they also contend that literature and art, at least, reached a perfection never to be equalled in Greece and Rome, *i. e.*, without Christianity. If this would show that the modern Christian nations have no law of literary and artistic progress to speak of, it would also imply that some of the ancients had one, and lost it for the race! Sir William Temple capped the climax of this absurdity by maintaining, with great fervor and grace of style, that human degeneracy is constant, and "the oldest books in every kind are the best," laying himself out largely on the spurious and worthless letters of Phalaris, as an exquisite and crowning example. If anything could possibly surpass this, it was the position of Dr. Lord, that emancipation was an instance of all sorts of social and moral deterioration, and that slavery has a place somewhere in the moral government of God. The dogmatic theory, in any form, ignores the manifest and noblest characteristics of the human mind, some of the brightest prophecies of its immortality, and one of the choicest proofs of our holy religion. It denies that civilization before or aside from Christianity *is* civilization, that partial Progress *is* Progress; which it is perilous for a scholar, at least, to deny. The adjustment here in-

dicated, recognizing the Natural Law as of God, accounts for separate and independent civilizations, as in Greece, India, Egypt, and in China, at this moment (a civilization that can no more be classed with others, than its language can be), for the state of these now, and for the lack of civilization elsewhere. It accounts equally for both the progressiveness and the unprogressiveness of men; and for the relapses of Christian and heathen nations. It recognizes the unquestionable fact that the stagnant heathen races were once rising and moving forward, and shows why, and how, they came to a dead stop. The Naturalistic Law cannot do this at all; the Christian Law alone, the Natural Law alone, cannot. The true Doctrine of Progress must do justice to both Laws, for both are necessary to human perfection, and both, of God. It is as useless to substitute one for the other, as a pen for a spade in farming, or a gun for an axe in carpentry. It is as useless, to ascribe to the one what is due to the other, as to refer the multiplication table and the Sermon on the Mount to a common origin, or either to the other. The true Doctrine is neither exclusively natural nor supernatural, but inclusively both. *Suum cuique.* To Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, to God, the things that are God's. It gives Christianity its proper glory, — neither too much nor too little. Possibly as "the *ultimate* fact of astronomical science," in the words of the Duke of Argyle, "is not the law of gravitation, but the *adjustment* between this law and others which are less known, so in the science of man, the basis of harmony now sketched out, is one which all

parties in relation to the Christian Religion may be tardy in coming together upon. Perhaps all Christian thinkers must come to it first, before Naturalistic ones can be expected to do so. The adjustment is not needed, indeed, for the two great Divine Laws themselves, only for our understanding of them. They adjust themselves, facts, methods, and forces, to each other every hour. In Christendom, at least, each leans upon the other. Every Christian person has the direct benefit of the Natural Law; every un-Christian person has much indirect and secondary benefit, at least, of the Christian Law. It is impossible to select any examples of secular improvement, in which forces that are Christian may not be blended.

But I must relieve your exemplary patience with the tardy, but sincere confession of the temerity of discussing a theme so broad and deep, in this centre of Puritan civilization, on the part of one whose home is far from great libraries in Western wilds. I have written in sight of the ruins of a college conflagration, not helpful to close or even hopeful thought, and my manuscript seems to me to carry the smell of fire. But the Doctrine here advanced is certainly the basis of all hope for the good time coming, of "sweeter manners, purer laws." It augurs the regeneration of society,— not its degeneration. It holds, with "the noblest nations," as Bunsen expresses it, to "an immutable, moral order of the world, constituted by Divine wisdom, and regulating the destinies of mankind," to "an *eternal* order," in which "truth, justice, wisdom, and moderation are sure to triumph; and

that when the contrary appears to be the case, the fault lies in our mistaking the middle for the end." It is both rational and reverent. It traces all real advance,— in the last analysis,— all its laws and all its forces, to the Law-giver and the Force-giver. It finds security for all virtue, learning, piety, and well-being in His stately purpose. He garners the fruits and sows the seeds of all. He keeps His own. "Civilizations have foundered; civilization itself, never." Christian civilization, its truer and better self, never can. We say with emphasis in the Christian ages,

"The drops run past us, but the river stays."

Let us look forward. Let even our errors be the errors of Christian progressives, never those of reactionists. They will be fewer, and they will be safer. "A man may fall forward," wrote our famous John Robinson, in one of a series of essays worthy to take place beside those of Bacon, "and in so doing, endanger his hands and face; but in falling backward, the danger is far greater, as we see in old Eli, of whom we read, that he fell backward, *and his neck brake*, and he died." Let us carry onward the light of virtue and truth as far as we may, for it is like the torch in the hand of the Greek runner, who bore it till he was spent, and then handed it to another, who bore it farther on. It is my faith that it will continue to be so, for it always has been; and ever

"Glimpses on my sight,
Through present wrong the eternal right,
And step by step, since time began,
I see the steady gain of man."

II.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE THE MOLD OF CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

THAT which a man holds by the head, and by heart, as the truth, vital to his soul's want, that properly is his Creed. It is to him the supreme truth, felt to be such, and grasped with a clear completeness of conviction, and held with a trustful holding worthy to be termed in such matter a Faith. It is the truth he has found true to his spiritual needs; the truth, or scheme of truths, if it be such, that verifies itself to his craving heart, as measuring and answering his sense of trouble and wrong, his felt sin and conscious guilt. He has found and embraced it as the Adequate Truth that opens to his soul the Way and the Life.

That is the man's Creed; and less than this will ever be found to lack somewhat that essentially belongs to the full significance of that term. No man properly has a creed, till in his deepest soul he beholds, owns, welcomes, trusts the truth that meets his want, and delivers himself over, heartily obedient to that truth. He may have had his little experiments at a Faith, his notional admissions of truth, endemic or

inherited; he has felt the sting of sin, the ache of conscience, the power of an endless life, and so may have speculated quite religiously, and set in order certain wisdoms that his soul has within reach in its serious moods; some theory of bread, when his hunger shall grow too sharp; his scheme of the infinite when his finite shall fail him; and he wraps these thin persuasions about him as a religion. But with all these, he has not attained to a Faith. Creed, properly, he has none, and little more than the elements and preparations of one.

For what truth soever a man heartily entertains, on terms that entitle it to be called his Faith or Creed, is not *held* simply, but itself *holds him* as with sovereign power of possession. It receives him, and proceeds to fashion the character and life to its own pattern. What is thus really in the creed passes into the man, holding the heart, and working transformingly from that centre. And the much we are wont to say and hear of faiths and creeds, as far less than this, should raise the doubt, whether things, as well as words, are not losing their meaning with us.

This power of heartily believed truth to mold and stamp the believer with its own image, is very impressively recognized and declared in Romans 6:17. There was, upon this company of Roman disciples, a certain image and superscription of grace, so peculiar and so clearly enstamped, that the Apostle knows them by that manifest token to be children of God. He sees and recognizes upon them the authentic stamp of the genuine believer. "*Ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was deliv-*

ered you." What was this imprint of the Faith, this seal and certificate of grace, so visible and infallible? And how was it produced?

The Apostle rests this confidence that these disciples are believers indeed, on a certain evident fact, which he gives us in this passage, but which is very imperfectly reported in our version. Indeed, the failure to give us in this passage the exact utterance of the Spirit is so great and obvious, and the Divine thought is so richly significant, when truly reported, that we may well take it in these juster terms, which all criticism approves and to which interpreters consent: YE HAVE HEARTILY OBEYED THAT MOLD OF DOCTRINE INTO WHICH YE WERE DELIVERED. This, then, was the distinguishing fact: The Christian Truths, heartily believed, had made their own distinctive mark on them. The Christian Doctrine had received these obedient souls, and charactered them with its proper imprint. And, by that mark, he knew them to be believers indeed, and also knew what creed alone could make that mark.

For, as men fashion a mold, tracing in it the type of figure and feature which they seek to form, and deliver into this the fused metal that it may obey this model and take from it the very lineaments designed, so in this new creating of souls after Christ, the Spirit has set in order the things of Christ, the Christian Truths, to be a mold of the Christian character and life — each peculiar Christian fact and doctrine set in its fit place and proportion, each having its own proper stamp to impart, each essential to the completeness of that life and character which shall bear

throughout the Christly impress and so be distinctively Christian — and altogether constituting the exact archetype and mold of what the Christian shall be; and this not as a mere furniture of opinion which the man has caught or cogitated, but a veritable Creed of his, a scheme of felt and believed Truth, taking possession of him, a receptacle of motives that are quick throughout with the plastic Spirit of Christ, into which the soul is delivered by faith, as the fused metal into the mold, that the very seal and stamp of Christ may be struck all around on the heart and life.

Such, in formal statement, is the divine thought of this passage; and it goes to the heart of this whole question of the formation and evidence of the Christian character. It defines very clearly the place and function of the truth in spiritual changes, and the nature and efficacy of genuine faith.

That this representation stands in no mere figure, but reports the very method of God in the handling of souls, will be plain from many scriptures. See how in other passages, here and there, every point in this picture is divinely attested. How largely we are taught that the gracious work of the delivering and transforming Spirit, in every stage and aspect of the saving process, is instrumented evermore by the truth — that by the truth, clasped home by faith, the soul lying in sin is first startled, convinced, slain — then begotten anew, quickened, renewed, edified, reconstructed, sanctified, saved. This shaping pressure is ever recognized. The passages in proof scarcely need to be recited. Recall only these: God's perfect law enlightening the eyes, making wise

the simple, converting the soul. Ps. 19 : 7,8. Of His own will begat He us by the word of truth. James 1 : 18. We are begotten through the Gospel. 1 Cor. 4 : 15. And so, being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever, ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit. 1 Pet. 1 : 22, 23. Sanctify them through thy truth. John 17 : 17. I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. John 14 : 6. We learn Christ, putting off the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, being renewed in the spirit of our mind, and being taught as the truth is in Jesus. Eph. 4 : 21, 24. If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8 : 31, 32. In all this process the Spirit of truth takes of the things of Christ and shews them to the believing; John 16 : 13, 15; and the bearing of the obedient soul while so learning Christ and passing over to be a new creature in His likeness, is described as walking in the truth, and abiding in the doctrine of Christ. 2 John : 4, 9.

We find, then, the representation of this passage to be no mere touch of casual imagery. It lies broadly bedded in the whole body of kindred Scriptures. It covers this general result: That the Truth which the soul finds true to its deepest needs, and receives with such hearty belief as deserves the name of Faith, holds the believer henceforth in its embrace, as the mold clasps the delivered metal, and characters him with its own impress.

But it is more than any such general doctrine of the office and power of truth that the Apostle declares. He discerns in these disciples a certain unique and remarkable character, not the religious merely, but a singular grace and exaltation of that; and the mold of doctrine, which alone could strike this shape and stamp, is surely more than the old forms of truth. It is the Christian Doctrine that has wrought this Christian Character, and, at sight, he recognizes in them the new stamp of the new mold. The Law could not do this. Here is more than Pharisaism ever conceived. This is not that abundant religiousness which blooms here and there on rare natures, as the fruit of culture, and an exact conscience. A new and higher cast of character is here; and manifestly it is the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, it is the Christ that has given Himself in new grace and truth to men, that is working this new phase of spirit and life. In that mold these souls have taken this impress.

No man knew better than did Paul himself, the power of this new and perfecting truth as it is in Christ. He speaks in this whole passage out of his own deep consciousness of the necessity of this Christian molding, and of his own blessed experience of it. All that he had been as the superlative legalist, moral, conscientious, religiously straitened on all sides,— all this had been softened and tempered. The Spirit of Truth had been showing him the things of Christ. In vain he had wrestled with the new revelation ever since that day when he stood by, and held the garments of them that stoned

Stephen; till at length all had been utterly fused by that epiphany of the risen Christ that flamed on him on the way to Damascus. From that hour all that self-competent and most religious Saul that he had been, was delivered into the mold of these new truths of Christ; and there had come forth this Christian Paul as the result. He knew in himself this new creation in Christ Jesus. And out of this experience he speaks now, recognizing in these souls the same spiritual reconstruction, the same Christly stamp, struck only by these Christian Truths on souls divinely tempered and submitted to that shaping.

The distinctive Christian Truths, then, are designed and employed by the Spirit of God as the perfect mold of Christian character and life.

(1.) Looking now, first, at this Gospel Doctrine, as properly the revelation of grace and truth, in the person and work of Jesus Christ, we recognize it at once as the wisdom and power of God for the deliverance and salvation of believing souls. It is fitted and adequate to that effect. The soul that once takes to heart these truths as true and vital to its felt want, and so makes these its veritable creed, and fairly delivers itself to their transforming power, will infallibly be wrought over into just that new creature in Christ which the saved sinner is represented to be. He will surely be renewed after the image of the Christ who thus clasps him all about in the embrace of His truth, being changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. Given the cause, we know the effect.

Inspecting the die, we know the impression it will strike.

Look now into this mold of Christian Doctrine. Observe these deep lines, these bold reliefs. The supreme facts are all here. Our sin, God's pity and remedy, divinely ordered and proportioned, besetting us on every side of our need. God manifest in the flesh,— the Incarnate Son of God, in travail of love for us lost, living our human life, dying our death, risen now and throned for us,— the atoning, teaching, sympathizing Christ Jesus, who, in this ministry of the divine fulness to all our want, is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, and so a Savior to the uttermost! Trace out the design to the last touch that adds grace to virtue. From this perusal of the mold alone, even beforehand, if no Christian had ever been seen by us in actual development, we could forecast with entire assurance what manner of man he must needs be in all holy conversation and Christ-likeness, who should be wrought to this pattern. If these truths take effect, the product will be the Christian character. Each truth will leave its proper mark, its own authentic character, on the believer. The material will be human still, taking and holding the impress with varying degrees of completeness and perfection; but so far as he obeys this mold of doctrine, the style of the man will be none other than a copy of Christ.

(2.) We may also reason from the effect to the cause, and infer quite completely for substance the whole Gospel from the character it produces. Given

the Christian man, bearing this evangelical stamp of grace in his spirit and conversation, and we know what he has been heartily believing, what vital, realized and obeyed truths have been fashioning him to that beauty and strength. He is what obedience to those truths through the Spirit has made him. He is the product of his Faith. For the instrumentality and motive pressure in all spiritual changes are lodged in the truth.

As, therefore, from the figure enstamped, we know what must have been the fashion of the die that struck it; as the casting betrays its mold, so that point by point you refer each feature to the particular configuration of the model that shaped it, — so the Christian man is formed by his Christian creed. We can trace each gracious peculiarity to the truth that wrought it. And none other than this very doctrine of Christ, as given in the Gospel, could form such a character as this.

It would even be quite possible in this way to construct ideally the very mold of motive requisite for the production of a character so unique. At least in its leading elements we could discover the Gospel from the Christian man. This Believer, so stamped with the evangelic virtues — what creed has been his to save him so? The naturalist derives from a single plant or animal, or even from a single organic part of such, the whole main world of plastic agencies that conditioned and produced it. By the same process, take this assemblage of characteristic Christian traits, or even any one of them that is vital — take this temper and life of unselfishness, this consecration

of love, this penitential humility, this joy of pardon and conscious recovery to goodness, this assiduity of loved service toward God and man, this felt personal union to an infinite friend — such a character, or any one trait that is of its substance, reveals again this very Gospel. The marks of the Lord Jesus are on it throughout. And seeing this saved sinner so struck through and printed over with the Cross, we thus judge that One has died for him; that, once dead, he lives henceforth a redeemed life, not unto himself, but under constraint of His love Who died for him and rose again. To be such as he is, he must have been such a sinner so saved.

And with insight only a little deeper we might go very far to discover, from inspection of any marked unchristian life and character, what has been believed instead of the Christian truth — what shape of error, what misbelief the man has been harboring and obeying, to make him what he is. For men show their faith by their works, and the character betrays the creed.

(3.) This process is verified in the experience of believers. The Christian is conscious of this doctrinal pressure in conforming him to Christ. He feels these influences of precept and principle touching him all round about with gracious compulsions, and sweetly constraining him out of the old into some blessed newness, assimilating him to Jesus. These Christian doctrines warn him, instruct him, correct him in righteousness. By these he is enlightened, guided, strengthened, moved evermore to holy aspirations and amendments. He feels, and has all along

felt, this Word of God pressing him on every side, quick, piercing soul and spirit, and discerning the thoughts and intents of his heart. He is conscious that every spiritual change in him has been by obeying the truth through the Spirit. In a word, he finds himself delivered by his faith into the mold of Christian doctrine, and that he can have no rest in it but by heartily obeying it. And so doing, the believing soul takes shape and feature after the likeness of his Lord.

This view of Christian Doctrine, as holding such place and power in God's scheme for renewing and saving the lost, invests it with a dignity, and demands for it an honor, which it too often lacks in our regard.

Clearly, this Truth, then, is a quite definite and positive matter, standing fast in the radical facts of man's sin, and God's movement of grace for our recovery. These are unchanging, true and the same ever and to all, vitally true to every sinning soul of man. They must be believed, trusted, obeyed, in order to salvation, as the multiplication-table must be believed and obeyed for just reckoning, or as that fire burns, food nourishes, unsupported bodies fall, must be held and heeded in order to safe living. Believe otherwise than that our sin is so mischievous, criminal and deadly, God so holy and just, and in Christ so gracious, as this Gospel declares, and your fiction though never so sincerely believed, will be a creed of death. We are to be saved by the truth as it is in Jesus, and not otherwise; and Doctrinal Christianity is the clear and authentic revelation

of this saving Christ in His Life, Teachings, and Death for us.

And as this mode of Christian doctrine is so definite and substantive, the Christian character is equally positive and peculiar. The apostolic test is decisive: it is a character conformed to the truth of Christ, true to that, marked by it, grace for grace. Genuine religion lies in hearty obedience to the revealed will of God. It is a renovating and transforming energy ever working the soul to this Divine pattern. Does the character answer to the mold, then? In spirit and life, is the man formed anew in the image of the truth? Do these specific Gospel facts and principles reappear in him, each enstamping its own figure of grace? Only so is it the Christian character, and only so is it to be surely discerned.

Of course this peculiar character is substantially one and the same in all believers. The same image, struck with varying degrees of clearness and fulness, is on them all. They are from one mold, and answer to its configuration. They cannot fail to wear certain unmistakable stamps of it. Amid all varieties of temperament, culture, and condition, the same image and superscription will distinguish them. Defective the impression may be, in the filling up, in some of the finer lines, the material being more or less fluent and facile. But certain positive characteristics, the authentic signatures of the Christly model, will surely be there.

It deeply concerns us to hold fast this view of the positive and distinctive character in the Christian

believer. Drifting from this, and accepting any other test than this visible conformity to the Christian Truth, adopting any scheme that liberalizes us away from this Divine Redeeming Christ into natural moralities and pious sentimentalism, we have changed our star and are sailing toward wreck. The broad, clear separateness of the renewed from the unrenewed will be confused and lost. Very widely this tendency is working. It has provided this broad, debatable ground of religious equivalents and christianistic indifferences, thronged by a multitude claiming the Christian name, of every variety of opinion and every corresponding shade of nebulous piety. But the twilight of this liberalism ever deepens toward the darkness of scepticism and infidelity; and he who is once quit of the truth, will be found not far from as Christless in his character as he is in his creed. Surely God's grace in saved sinners is no such shadowy and indefinite somewhat, one thing here, another there, to be verified nowhere. The Christian is a marked man. From a single unique feature in a mold, you could declare among a thousand which was the one casting that came of it; and surely from these deep-cut and distinctive lines of Christian doctrine, indubitable prints will appear on the soul that has obeyed them.

And the deliverance of a soul into this embrace and molding power of the truth — the softening of the hard, stiff nature into that plastic state of contrition and pliancy to holy motive, in which it yields itself fluently in hearty obedience to the truth — this is the gracious work of the Holy Spirit in that expe-

rience which we term conviction of sin. This is the significance of that season, which, however it vary in its fashion, is ever the voice of One crying in the wilderness of sin and preparing the way of God's grace in the soul. In that furnace the stony heart is melted and the will suppled to divine shaping. Here we learn the knowledge of sin and the depth of our entanglement, and come to cry, Oh, wretched — who shall deliver? and so pass to the no condemnation in Christ Jesus. It is an indispensable lesson. For the completeness of this preparatory experience determines not only the genuineness of the conversion, but the style of all later developments of gracious character. Not only the broad and plenary conversion, but every subsequent stage of grace, will bear witness in the sharp, clear stamp of the mold, how fluent the soul was made under the strivings of the convincing Spirit.

One great reason of the defective and unshapely character, often seen in real Christians, is to be found in their incomplete and partial views of truth. A full and symmetrical piety requires, for its development, the intelligent and hearty holding of the Christian truths in their completeness, each in place and proportion. Drop out one, and its mark is missing. One part of the mold is lacking, and its appropriate stamp does not appear. Vague notions of truth can yield only blurred impressions. Pet doctrines, fondly exaggerated, misshape to their own disproportion. Error deforms. Hence come distortion, an erring conscience, instability; for there needs the close, full, uniform clasp of the truth, with equable

touch and pressure, all round about the soul, to give it symmetry, and completeness in Christ. Only as it is thus broadly bedded in the fulness of truth, can a character attain to the perfect poise of steadfast faith and virtue. And we may see how close we are upon profane implications when we presume to classify God's revelations of truth, these as essential, those important, others more or less considerable. There is not one of all the doctrines of the Gospel that can be ranked as unimportant, or non-essential. Every one of them has its essential purpose and efficiency. God would give no unimportant truths. Each enters as a divine touch into the perfect mold of doctrine, and is essential to the unity of the faith, and the integrity of the Christian man, in the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. The whole body of character can be fitly joined together and compacted only by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part. All are profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

How false and pernicious, then, is that sentiment which resents all definitive doctrine, and denounces creeds as logically impertinent to character! It finds expression in a great variety of forms, and in all the dialects of disbelief and misbelief, uttering, all, this ultimate maxim of liberalism and very creed of infidelity: All faiths are indifferent, all creeds an impertinence; what signify a man's beliefs or disbeliefs, so he but lives well? "His can't be wrong,

whose life is in the right." And deeper than they mean or know, it is true after all; for a little farther down, at the bottom of that well, you reach this central truth, that, "If any man will do God's will, he shall know of the doctrine." But the meaning is that all this notion of an essential orthodoxy, a positive truth, a faith inherently right or wrong, is simply the dream of fanaticism; that a creed is a speculation, and faith a fancy, having little or nothing to do in determining the character and life; that it matters little whether the truth, if such a thing there really be, or something else than that, be held. And having thus resolved to gather figs of thistles, one has it in order next to doubt, seeing what thistle-fruit it is we get so, whether there be really any such thing as figs, after all. We must even our liberalism all through. Is it not part of the same illusion, that there is any essential good or evil in conduct and character? And so men are adrift, to believe as they please, and to live as they list. Whereas, that order of thought is simply preposterous. It matters all in the world what a man does really believe, and so hold as to bring it vitally home to his soul. What he believes, molds him in spirit and in life. The connection is deeply logical and practical between a man's real faith and his character. For what the Believer believes, is not to him simply a formulated speculation, but a vital power and a formative principle. He is the last man to be trusted with an error; another might play fast and loose with it, but he will be it and do it, perfecting his faith by his works. The very roots of the character and life run down thus into

the subsoil of a man's faith. And it were no more preposterous in logic or false to fact to say, No matter about the mold, if the casting only come right, than to say, No matter what a man believes, if only he be right! The casting is what the mold makes it. The Christian is what the Christian faith makes him.

How precious, then, is doctrinal knowledge! The Christian believer is delivered into the mold of so much truth as he intelligently holds and truly believes. He obeys only so much as he knows, and as he knows it. Only that much can touch the character and order the life. And to yield the true character it must be the very truth, whole and only. So much as he takes home by the intellect and heart as true and vital to his soul's need, will have him in shaping. Truth unknown cannot influence him. Partial truth will give partial results, and may even have the mischievous force of error. Every believer, therefore, should seek, as for priceless treasure, to be well and broadly grounded in doctrine, ever verifying his creed by the studied Word, intent to know accurately and obey heartily the whole Gospel of truth. And all the apparatus of culture, provided of God to our need, has its dignity of office and honor and power in its relation to the truth. The Church is the pillar and ground of the truth. The Christian Ministry is a Teaching Ministry, and fills the New Testament idea in heralding, manifesting, rightly dividing the Gospel of Christ. What else can it be, then, than Doctrinal preaching, in the fair breadth of that term? What other than Doctrinal

can be Practical preaching? Doctrine is the basis of duty. Truth has its issues in the life. What else can we hopefully preach, in its length and breadth of application, for shaping the inner and the outer life of men to the mind of God?

More than ever, then, let us prize and honor God's Truth, and give it in our esteem the large place God has given it in His method of salvation. Let us trust it as God's own power and wisdom, mighty through Him to the pulling down of all strongholds of sin, and to the upbuilding of all Christian grace and goodness,— the very mold in which Christly character is to be cast. And count those worthy of double honor who labor in the word and doctrine.

III.

THE CHRISTIAN CONSCIOUSNESS; ITS APOLOGETICAL VALUE.

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CLEMENT of Alexandria, in the curious treatise which he fittingly styled his "Patch-work," among a multitude of equally suggestive observations, has given us this: "There is a difference between that which one saith of the truth, and that which the truth saith of itself." His meaning, psychologically stated, is, that there is a wide difference between a clear perception that a thing *appears* to be true, and a clear perception *that it is* true. The distinction is as important as it is just. The two mental acts or states are separated by an interval broader than that bounded by the Sakwala of the Buddhist universe. The difference is not merely that between a "perhaps" and a "verily," it is all the difference between admitted ignorance and conscious knowledge.

Now, just corresponding to this radical antithesis, we find in the field of Christian Apology two drifts of thought, two endeavors, two variant conceptions of the work of the Christian Apologist. The one party aims to produce belief, the other to produce knowledge. The one deals in likelihoods, reasona-

blenesses, arguments, evidences; the other in spiritual realities as objects of spiritual cognition. The one appeals to the understanding and asks a judgment favorable to the claims of Christianity; the other appeals to the spiritual faculties and to their normal use promises personal knowledge. The one method can never carry a mind beyond a certain favorable poise of the librating judgment, mathematically represented at any given moment by the sum of perceived probabilities in favor of the Christian system, minus the sum of perceived probabilities against it. In this position one new fact may suffice to shift the preponderance of probability and change the favorable judgment. In the other case, there being true knowledge, no further knowledge can make the first untrue. All added facts but enlarge and perfect the original knowledge. Paley is a classical representation of the first of these tendencies, Pascal of the second.

Now, without denying the legitimacy of the purely argumentative school of Apology, or disparaging any real services which it may have rendered in the history of the Church, we certainly may claim for that perpetual vindication of Christianity which proceeds upon the idea of bringing men to *know* the truth, a far higher aim and a far superior power. To justify this estimate it is only necessary to look into the distinctive peculiarities of the Christian type of religious consciousness, and to mentally connect them with the principal functions of Christian Apology.

What, then, are the distinctive peculiarities of the Christian consciousness?

To begin at the bottom, we need to observe, that every man has some sort of a religious consciousness. By virtue of his intellectual constitution, each must have a more or less distinct realization of personal religious beliefs, impulses, acts. The beliefs may be true or false, the impulses strong or weak, the acts right or wrong; but whatever they are, the mind takes cognizance of them, as clearly and necessarily as of any other mental phenomena. Whatever a man believes, he knows he believes; whatever a man loves or fears, he knows he loves or fears; whatever a man worships, he knows he worships. No man can be religious or irreligious without knowing it. Whichever he is, he is it consciously. Religious consciousness is, therefore, as universal as religion and irreligion.

The broadest and most fundamental distinction in the religious consciousness of men, is that resulting from their differing conceptions of the universe of being. A theistic conception of the universe produces a theistic type of religious consciousness, a pantheistic conception a pantheistic type, a polytheistic conception a polytheistic type, an atheistic conception an atheistic type. These types of religious consciousness differ as widely from each other as would four universes answering to the four intellectual conceptions. Indeed, they are so incompatible with each other, that it is almost impossible for a man, in whom either type is fully developed, to realize to himself, even in imagination, the world of religious ideas, emotions, and volitions in which a mind possessed of one or the other types, lives and

moves. Thus a genuine theist finds almost as great difficulty in entering into the real religious thought and feeling and life-sphere of a genuine pantheist, as he does in entering into the real thought and feeling and life-sphere of an elephant.* In like manner the fetish-worshipper has no more idea of the religious consciousness of the theist, than he has of the scientific or cosmological consciousness of the modern astronomer, to whom night-fall is the dawn of the true day, and the circling earth itself but the flagship of a celestial Coast Survey.

Less broadly, yet not less clearly distinguished are the sub-types of religious consciousness developed under the influence of the great historic religions of the world. Thus the Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan varieties, while strongly resembling each other in all that distinguishes them as a monotheistic type, are yet perfectly distinct when compared among themselves. Similarly we find that no two polytheistic or pantheistic peoples, or sects, ever developed identical forms of religious consciousness. How different the world of religious realizations in which the ancient Hellenic mind moved, from that in which our pagan ancestors of Northern Europe lived! What awkwardness would even Spinoza experience in adjusting his God-consciousness to that of the worshipper of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, and their three hundred and thirty millions of associate divinities!

* "Die ältern kritiklosen Zoographen legten dem Elephanten, unter andern löblichen Eigenschaften, auch die Tugend der Religiosität bei; allein die Religion der Elephanten gehört in das Reich der Fabeln." *Feuerbach*, Wesen des Christenthums, S. 24.

Each consciousness, however, is alike pantheistic. So the atheistic religious consciousness of modern naturalism, represented by such men as Comte, Büchner, and Holyoake, differs as radically from the atheistic consciousness of original Buddhism as European science from Asiatic dreams.

In attempting to set forth the leading characteristics of that type of religious consciousness produced under the influence of the Christian religion, it will be manifestly proper to constantly inquire after its ideal or normal manifestation, rather than any defective or perverted ones in this or that individual or sect. For this ideal or normal consciousness, we shall naturally go back to the experiences and teachings of the original founders of the religion, as these are reflected in their extant words. In doing this we assume nothing further than that their language as truthfully mirrors their mind as that of other men is taken to mirror theirs.

The first distinctive trait of the ideal Christian consciousness, I understand to be, that it includes an immediate knowledge, or feeling, or realization of some kind, of personal communion with God. In such a consciousness there is an immediate realization, not so much of belief in God, as of the very presence of God. The man is conscious of dwelling in God, and of God dwelling in him, of loving God, and of being loved and blessed of him in turn.

This mental realization of personal communion with God, was exemplified in its highest perfection in the religious consciousness of Jesus. He ever

seems to know himself the beloved Son, in whom the Father is well pleased. With the most unfaltering confidence, he affirms, "I do always those things that please him." He claims that the divine Spirit is given unto him without measure; that he lives and teaches and heals and suffers in vital, conscious union with his Father. He speaks indeed of having been sent forth by the Father, but to prevent misapprehension, he immediately adds, "He that sent me, *is with me.* The Father hath not left me alone."

His consciousness of the Father's presence amounts to a consciousness of mutual indwelling. Rebuking the dulness of Philip's spiritual perception, he asks, "Believest thou not, that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" His words and works are not his alone, but products of a joint-agency. "The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself; but the Father, which dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." "Believe me," he concludes, "believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." This consciousness finds equally explicit expression again and again.

Nor does it appear that this blessed realization of divine fellowship was regarded by Christ as a prerogative peculiar to himself. Indeed, he promises it to his disciples. He tells them of some mysterious change which is to come over them after he is gone. He gives minute directions as to their place of sojourn until this promise shall be fulfilled. "Tarry ye at Jerusalem, until ye shall be endued with power from on high." He leads them to expect, along with

this mysterious enduement, a better understanding of much he had taught them, a revelation of things they could not at the time of the promise yet "bear." They are to sustain a new relation to him, to enjoy more of his prerogatives, no more to be called servants, but friends. His peace is henceforth to be given unto them, his Father is to be their Father, his God their God.

These wonderful promises certainly contemplated a prospective indwelling of God in their souls, and a distinct consciousness on their part of fellowship with him. That they were not delusive, the whole post-pentecostal experience of those disciples abundantly proves. No sooner had they been endued with the fulness of the Holy Ghost, than they betrayed the possession of as lively a sense of God's presence and love as ever their Master had done. Their confident declaration was, "Hereby *know we* that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

But just here we note a peculiarity which forever differentiates the religious consciousness of the disciples from that of the Master. Jesus claimed that the Father was ever with him, but to his sorrowing disciples he promises not only the presence of the Father, but also his own. Indeed, he says of all who love him, that they shall enjoy this twofold indwelling. "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." He promises that this shall be not only a fact, but also a fact of consciousness. "In that day ye shall know that I

am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." In his high priestly intercession for all that should ever believe on him, he prays, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one *in us*." Evidently, Christ's idea was not that his disciples were simply to succeed to, and exactly reproduce his perfect consciousness of the Father's loving presence; it was rather that they should be taken up into this joint fellowship of Christ and the Father, and hold communion with them both.

Exactly corresponding with this, we find the subsequent experience of the disciples. One of them speaks for all, when he says, "Truly, our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." Whilst, therefore, Jesus uniformly speaks of conscious fellowship with the Father, his early disciples speak at least with equal frequency of communion with the Son also. They are as conscious of immanence in Him as of immanence in the Father. They are as conscious of his, as of the Father's indwelling in them. This peculiarity of their consciousness reflects itself constantly in their speech. They habitually speak of being "in Christ Jesus," as a characteristic of all believers. At the same time they are equally wont to speak of Christ in them, the hope of glory. So intimate is this conscious intercommunion of life, that one of the most clear-headed and logical of them all, seems in danger at times of almost confounding his own personality with Christ's: "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless, I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Saluting one another, these earliest disciples were wont to recognize and asso-

ciate as sources of all spiritual life and blessing both invisible participants in their spiritual communion. They did it in such language as this. "Grace be unto you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ," "Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."

But have we yet exhausted the contents of the apostolic Christian consciousness? Was it simply and solely a consciousness of living fellowship with the Father and with Christ? It certainly seems not. Reverting once more to Christ's promises to his disciples, we certainly find that he pledged them another presence more explicitly than he did the Father's or his own. He calls this third party the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth. He cannot mean himself, in some etherialized and glorified form, for he clearly distinguishes this new party as "another comforter," given in answer to his prayer, and to take his place. He says of him, "He shall glorify me." "He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you." "He shall testify of me." "He shall bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Evidently Jesus cannot have been thinking and speaking of himself in some posthumous shape.

Again, it is hard to see how he could have meant in this promise any prospective form of the Father's manifestation. He distinguishes this comforter as clearly from the Father as from himself. He says: "The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you." Here all three

are mentioned in a way which naturally implies the distinct personality of each. The Comforter is represented as personal, both by correlation with the other two personalities, and because performing the personal office or work of teaching. Yet he is distinguished from the Father, because sent by him, and from Christ, because sent in his name. In other statements, our Lord repeatedly discriminates between the Comforter and the Father, affirming that the former "proceedeth from" the latter, and that the latter "gives" the former. Accordingly, he prescribes a formula of initiation into his Church for all coming ages, in which Father, Son and Holy Spirit find each coördinate place and separate mention. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."

Passing now from the Master's promise to the actual religious consciousness mirrored in the apostolic word, we find mention of a "fellowship of the Spirit," just as we before found mention of a fellowship with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We find the same idea of mutual immanence. The apostles speak as if consciously in the Comforter, and use such language as this: "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Anon they speak of the indwelling of the Holy Ghost in them and in their fellow-believers. Then they are temples of the Holy Ghost. This reciprocal indwelling is the real badge of discipleship: "Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you." It is the condition and characteristic of

divine Sonship; for only as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God. It is the source of all filial joy and free utterance toward the Father. If any soul cries out, "Abba Father," it is because being a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into such soul, enabling it thus to cry. They speak of the reception of this Spirit as essential to the full and normal Christian experience; "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They proffer the precious gift to all penitent and obedient souls; "Repent, and be baptized every one of you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Their intensely personal conception of this Spirit betrays itself in such constantly occurring expressions as these: "the mind of the Spirit"; "the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered"; "the Spirit searcheth all things even the deep things of God"; "all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." Yet, in their religious consciousness, this intelligent, sympathetic, groaning, searching, and administering Spirit was not identical with, but a gift of, the Father. So far, indeed, is he from being the Father or the Son, that we find access to the Father represented as possible to men only by this Spirit, and through the Son. "Through him [Christ], we both [*i. e.* Jews and Gentiles] have access, by one Spirit, unto the Father."

This, and similar expressions, are striking and noteworthy. They furnish a clew to the right under-

standing of the spiritual communion enjoyed in the apostolic consciousness. It was not three fellowships of the soul with three other beings called Father, Son and Holy Ghost; it was rather one fellowship, triply mediated on the divine side. In the Apostolic realization of it, there was no possibility of communion with him, whom Jesus had taught them to call the Father, save through the Son, and in or by the Holy Ghost. Christ's declaration was to them most true; to wit, that no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he, to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him. In like manner, to their minds, there can be no right recognition of the Son without the Spirit; for on the one hand, "No man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed," and on the other, "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." To complete the circuit, the Holy Spirit is not the natural possession of any man, but is a gift of the Father, procured by the Son. In the apostolic religious consciousness, therefore, divine communion is not simple and immediate; with one solitary objective personality, it is rather a complex and mediated one, a participation in the intercommunicated love, grace, and fellowship of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Hence the apostles sum up their permanent intercessory aspiration for the Christian brotherhood most completely in a tripartite formula, exactly parallel to Christ's baptismal one. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen."

Such a religious consciousness as this was some-

thing wonderfully strange and new. It presented an astonishing contrast to every earlier type of which mankind had knowledge. It is not remarkable, therefore, that we find the disciples giving great prominence to the newness of their spiritual experience. Especially do we find them contrasting it with the two types of religious consciousness best known to them: first, the earthward and selfward directed, historically expressed in surrounding Gentilism; and second, the Godward directed, historically expressed in genuine Judaism. By nature, according to the apostolic representation, we all inherit the first of these types. By nature, Jew and Gentile are children of wrath, psychical not spiritual, alienated from the life of God, spiritually dead. All sin, and come short of the glory of God. The office of the Spirit of God is to show men this. The first effect of his agency, so far as the consciousness is concerned, is to fill the soul with fear and grief, and a terrible sense of personal sinfulness and just divine displeasure. Here, there is divine operation in the soul, but no divine fellowship. This comes only when the thus awakened soul repents of its sins with a godly sorrow, and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. Then, being justified by faith, it can cry out, "God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he hath loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, and raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." Here is installation into a conscious, blessed life-communion with Christ. The old state was death, the new is that of

perfect resurrection life. Here, with Dante, one can turn a fresh leaf in life's book, and inscribe upon its centre, in the reddest of letters,

INCIPIT NOVA VITA.

This the apostles everywhere assume and teach to be the normal and usual genesis of the Christian type of religious consciousness in the case of all hitherto heathen and positively God-alienated forms of that consciousness.

But there was another type, well known to the early disciples of Christ, that generated under the influence of Old Testament piety. This was characterized, not by personal hostility to God, but by reverence for his holy name; not by lawless gratifications of natural lust, but by beautiful exemplifications of all continent and self-controlling virtues; not by selfishness, but by self-sacrificing obedience to God. Christ appreciated the beauty and lofty excellence of the genuine Old Testament type of religious consciousness; he had its noblest exemplification before his very eyes in the person of his forerunner; yet, contrasting the inner life of the incoming dispensation with that of the old, he declares, "Verily, I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." This new life is a new wine, requiring new bottles. As a new life, it cannot be inaugurated, even in devout souls, without affecting their religious consciousness.

Its obtainment will be like the obtainment of a pearl of great price, yea, like finding life after considering it lost. The grand difference between the genesis of the full Christian consciousness in such souls, and its genesis in souls of the natural and heathenish type is, that in the former case it comes later in the religious development. The crisis which fairly and fully inaugurates the new consciousness may be just as marked and memorable, but it is not associated in their minds with their first conscious act or effort to turn from sin to God. It is rather the hour when, by a special baptism of the Holy Ghost, the faithful servant is made an adopted son, when the Israelite, in whom there is no guile, becomes transformed into a flaming apostle, speaking with tongues, and wielding superhuman powers. Thus was it in the experience of the first disciples themselves. Very likely it would have been difficult, if not impossible, for any of them to fix the exact hour, when, according to the theological phrase, they were converted; nevertheless, all knew the precise day, and hour of the day, when "suddenly" the Pentecostal fire lit up within them illuminations which were never more to die. Equal definiteness marked the experience of the three thousand who shared in the mighty baptism. They, too, had enjoyed the preparatory experience of Old Testament piety. They were the faithful Simeons and Annas and Elizabeths of three continents, "devout men," waiters for the consolation of Israel. Many of them were doubtless saints, according to their light and privileges. With them, and all similar converts, in the weeks and months

succeeding, the new religious consciousness had as clearly marked a commencement as in the case of Gentile converts, yet one very different in its antecedents and concomitants. In the one case it was a sudden transit out of Pagan ignorance of God or conscious enmity against God, into the blessedness of loving communion with him; in the other, it was the inbreak of the life and light of God upon a soul which had long devoutly sought him. The subsequent religious consciousness in the two cases was substantially the same. It was a consciousness of present living communion with the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. So oft as they contrasted it with their Christless past, it caused them to break forth with Paul, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." Surveying a hostile world, they declared, by its inspiration, "Neither death nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Even at the grave's mouth, in the edge of the shadows and darkness of the Hebrew *sheol*, this consciousness only voiced itself in louder peans of exultation, "O Death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

Now, had this type of religious consciousness forever disappeared with the decease of those earliest Christians, what a beautiful thing it would still be for men to contemplate! How like a perfect ideal

would it stand out before each questioning, struggling soul! How serious-minded philosophers would point to it, and say, "Ah, were we only capable of reproducing those experiences and that consciousness, how would all our doubts depart. It would then be ours to *know God*, and in that knowledge, to drown forever all tormenting fears and dubitations."

Thank God! the supposition is inadmissible! Thank God! the old apostolic type of religious consciousness is, in every essential feature, yet extant. To-day, as eighteen hundred years ago, there are men who know God; who hold conscious communion with him, who, through Christ, by his Spirit, have access to the Father. The fact is attested by a far greater number of competent witnesses than ever attested a transit of Venus, or the existence of the Gulf Stream. Thousands of the most intelligent and sober men and women in the world, of the most diverse denominational attachments, bear witness, every week, to the occurrence of just such a transition in their religious consciousness as that which accompanied the apostle's preaching. They say that they were once without God, and without hope in the world, but that they now dwell in God, and God dwells in them. Whereas, they once were blind in all spiritual things, now they see. Once they hated God, but now they love him. Once they were out of Christ, but now they are in him. They feel themselves to be new creatures, and old things are passed away. Behold! all things are become new.

The Christian consciousness of these men attests

its genuineness, not only by producing the same supernatural graces of character which adorned the earliest Christians, but also by manifesting the same self-propagative power. To-morrow some such scene as this will transpire in one of these Boston streets. One of these men, possessed of the apostolic Christian consciousness, will accost some consciously wicked man with the question, "Friend, are you a Christian?" "No," will be the reply, "I cannot say that I am." Then will follow an affectionate invitation to the wicked man to repent of his sins, to seek their remission through the blood of Christ, to ask a new heart through the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost. Two, three, four weeks hence, you will find that man, whose heart and lip are to-day foul with cursing, praising God, hastening from friend to friend with the tidings that he is a changed man, that the greatest transformation of his life has passed upon and within him. He will testify that he is now happy in God, a Christian, and, as such, request admission to the Church of Christ. Such scenes are constantly transpiring all around us. Here is simply Apostolic preaching, with the old Apostolic result. In this instance, the genesis of the new religious consciousness will be after the Gentile Christian type.

Step into yonder "Holiness meeting," where the one theme is the Higher Christian Life, so called, and you shall find living examples of a Christian consciousness of the other apostolic variety, one commencing, not in conversion, but in a Pentecost at the close of a long Old Testament experience.

There you shall find men and women, saying, "For ten, twenty, thirty years, I was a professing Christian, but a worshipper in the outer court. All those dreary years I tried to serve God, but could never feel quite sure my service was acceptable. I hoped in God, sometimes believed myself Christ's, but could never come to the blessed assurance, 'My beloved is mine, and I am his.' The joyful confidence of some Christians about me, even of some just started in the Christian life, staggered me, oh so often! I said within myself, 'It cannot be that I am a Christian.' I have never passed through this crisis which others describe. I never have been able to say with them, I know that I am passed from death unto life, or that the Spirit beareth witness with my spirit that I am a child of God."

Then the speaker will go on to narrate how, from such a doubting, timorous Old-Testament servant of God, he suddenly became a son; how, stimulated by the contrast between his own cold and comfortless condition, and the deep, strong, and blessed consciousness of divine communion enjoyed by some happier believer, he was led to study God's idea of normal religious life, to review his promises, and how, appropriating those promises with a fresh understanding and a quickened faith, on such a day, about such an hour, the baptism of the Holy Ghost fell, the gift of power came, a beatific vision tranced the soul into a sweet sense of God's all-conquering and everlasting love. Perhaps he will say, as scores of them do say, that the experience contradicted all his previous conceptions, all his life-long beliefs,

respecting the law and nature of religious life. Possibly he will say, "Twelve months ago I should have received with utter incredulity the statement that any one could utter, mentally or orally, a doxology to Jesus three hundred and sixty-five days long, with no intermission save that of sleep, and that balmy sleep itself would often flee from the presence of a sweeter delight, the luxury of praise. I find my mistake in supposing the witness of the Spirit in its higher manifestations intermittent corrected. The reverse is true. It is intermittent in its lower manifestations; in its highest it is constant." These, indeed, are the very words of one of these witnesses, penned but a few days ago, upon the first anniversary of the beginning of his higher life. The writer is a Christian divine, at the head of an American college, who, during the twenty years of public life preceding his pentecostal baptism, was distinguished for nothing so much as for constitutional coolness of temperament, accuracy of Greek scholarship, and hatred of religious pretense. Just such reproductions of primitive Christian experience of the Jewish-Christian type of origination may be found in many branches of the modern Church, in every branch where Apostolic Christianity is preached in all its fulness of privilege and promise.

Undoubtedly, a genuine Christian consciousness may come into being, in modes less sudden and revolutionary than either of the two just mentioned; but what I am here asserting is the grand fact, that the old Apostolic type of religious consciousness is not extinct; that we have numberless living examples

of each of its primitive varieties. In thousands, it may be faint and intermittent, but in other thousands it exists in all its primitive strength and vividness. A revelation of God is still progressing in humanity. Christ is working miracles every day in every part of Christendom. The Holy Ghost is constantly repeating Pentecost in many an upper chamber. Within, in the very soul of the Christian, is found the crowning evidence of Christianity. Here God himself is the demonstrator, and his demonstration is the demonstration of the spirit and of power.

I spoke, at the outset, of other forms of religious consciousness, atheistic, polytheistic, pantheistic, but all these are consciousnesses of belief, not of knowledge. The atheist does not know that there is no God; he merely thinks so. From the very nature of the case, he cannot know or prove what he asserts. As John Foster has well shown, a man needs to be God in order to know there is none. "Unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be in some place manifestations of a Deity, by which even he would be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one he does not know may be God." Thus, unless he is omnipresent and omniscient, that is, unless he precludes all other divine existence by being God himself, he cannot know that the being whose existence he denies, does not exist.

In like manner, in the polytheistic consciousness, there is no direct and immediate knowledge of the gods believed in. The ancient worshippers of Zeus

and Athênê and Apollo and Artemis and Poseidôn and Aphroditê never dreamed of conscious communion with these divinities in their own souls. They believed in the existence of such beings, and in their traditional mythological powers and characteristics, but they were not conscious of personal fellowship with any one of them. They viewed them as objects of worship, but not as objects of actual knowledge. So everywhere and always. The polytheist believes, but never knows. He cannot promise to men of other faiths, not even to the sincerest proselyte, certain knowledge that his gods really exist. Only the degraded fetish-worshipper, whose god is a black pebble or a crooked stick or a grotesque lump of rags or hair, can claim a personal knowledge of the true object of worship.

In this respect, the predicament of the pantheist is not less embarrassing than that of the atheist. He denies the existence of any and every God save the unconscious totality of all real being. But what does he know about it? How can he know, first, that all real being is, in essence, one? Then, how can he know that the one real being is unconscious, impersonal? He can know neither of these things without an absolutely complete and perfect knowledge of the entire universe of being. If he knows all beings save one, that one may be the God of Christian Revelation. If he knows every attribute of universal and absolute being, save one, that one may be conscious personality. Omniscience is essential to a denial of omniscience. The simple fact, therefore is, and remains, that the pantheist knows noth-

ing which other men do not know; he merely imagines, believes, dogmatises.

Now, the signal advantage which the Christian has ever had over all atheists, polytheists, pantheists, and even speculative theists is, that while they all merely believe, he knows. He has not only sought God, but found him. He has ascertained that there is an objective reality, answering to his idea of God. Indeed, his present idea of God is itself a product of that reality, just as his idea of a given friend has come from the objective existence and bearing of that friend. By virtue of the conscious, divine communion which he has won, he has a faith which stands not in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. No fact of consciousness can ever be argued down; hence, to every possessor of normal Christian consciousness, all arguments against the possibility or fact of the existence of a personal God, are simply the dogmatisings of ignorance over against the certainties of personal knowledge. They are as forceless to him as are the old mediæval arguments against the sphericity of the earth, to one who has himself circumnavigated it. This is the value of the Christian consciousness to its possessor in the field of theistic and anti-theistic speculation.

In the narrower field of controversy, where theistic naturalism and supernaturalism grapple, the facts of a normal Christian consciousness forever settle for its possessor every speculative doubt and difficulty. Is it suggested that the Scripture miracles are incredible, the Christian is not disturbed. He says, within himself, "In my own consciousness, I have witnessed

a miracle greater than any of those, a miracle including all of them, a miracle which was at once an opening of blind eyes, an unstopping of deaf ears, a casting out of devils, a creative production of bread and wine, a healing, yea, a resurrection from the dead. There can be no greater miracle than that which God has wrought in me."

Is it alleged that an incarnation is inconceivable; the Christian heart says, It is no more inconceivable that God should become a partaker of human nature, than that man should become a partaker of the divine nature. If I can become a son of God, God can become a son of man. Ascent is harder than descent. If man can achieve a heavenly birth, God surely can an earthly one. If I can become inspirate, he surely can become incarnate. My partial theanthropic life legitimates, yea, necessitates, the supposition of a perfect one. That perfect one is Christ's.

In just this way, the possessor of a normal Christian consciousness meets and dissipates every speculative difficulty which deists, of all schools, urge against the great facts of the Christian system, such as Supernatural Revelation, Inspiration, human Sinfulness, Incarnation, Atonement, Miracles, Supernatural Transformations of character. His own new life has lifted him into a sphere where all these things are as normal and natural as lullabies and patriotic celebrations and police courts and social reforms and monument building are in the sphere of natural human society.

He sees the natural and the supernatural in their true relation. In his own personal experience both

meet and blend. He sees these wise philosophers of the natural in their true light; sees how all their difficulties come, not from knowledge, but from ignorance; not from breadth, but from narrowness; not from a point of vision above the Christian, but one below it. He pities them, but cannot share their intellectual perplexities. He is as far beyond all such perplexities as the grown man is beyond the speculative difficulties of his embryonic period touching possibilities of birth.

But the Christian consciousness has apologetic value beyond its own subjects. It surpasses all reasonings in bringing pagans and unbelievers to an acceptance of the Christian faith.

The man who knows God will always impress men who know him not. If they are sincere seekers after the truth, they will eagerly confess their own darkness and ignorance, and desire to share his light. Even if averse to truth and righteousness, they will be affected, despite themselves, by the marked contrast between his peace and calm and blessedness of soul, and their own unrest and gloom and apprehension. They will inevitably covet his manifest superiority to the circumstances which make their life a bitterness and mockery. Witnessing his triumphal departure out of this world, they will cry out, with the ancient ethnic prophet of the East, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

The proudest, keenest, most subtile and erudite skepticism of the ages is not proof against this silent influence of Christian character. A former disciple

of Strauss and Feuerbach and Baur and Schwegler, thus tells the story of his recovery to the Christian faith: "What particularly aided me was the idea, or rather the reality, of regeneration. I saw before me men whom I was compelled to recognize as *regenerate* men. From childhood, I had seen such. An inmost voice told me that I too must be born again. But if so, then there must be a superhuman being of whom men can be born again, a living God. And more: what regeneration is to the individual, that is Christ to total humanity, the living principles of the transformation of flesh into spirit. And thus, starting from the inmost centre of my own life, I was led back to the supermundane God and to the historical Christ, the crucified and ascended."

The man thus recovered from the negations of Tubingen has given a life-time to the defence and propagation of Christian principles, and become, in his generation, a most honored and successful defender of the faith.* His experience is but one of a thousand similar ones, where radical and confirmed infidelity has yielded before the silent, unobtrusive influence of simple Christian living.

But these indirect and unintentional effects of the Christian consciousness are only the least. The Christian, of normal experience, is of necessity an irrepressible propagandist. He cannot hold his peace. He has found the panacea for all human misery; the gate from death and darkness to immortal life; the spell which transmutes children of

* Carl August Auberlen, author of *Die Göttliche Offenbarung*, and other works.

the devil into children of the Highest. Of the mere believer in the Evangelical system, Starr King affirmed, "He must be either a maniac or a missionary." What statement, then, can be strong enough to even hint the aggressive impulse of the man who has passed from the standpoint of mere belief to that of personal spiritual experience? His conscious union with an almighty Saviour lifts him above all fear, all hesitancy, all calculation of consequences. In dungeons and stocks, and racks and martyr-fires, he shouts aloud for joy, and dies with songs of victory.

Such enthusiasm is infectious. The half-faith of false religions fall before it; the coldness of false philosophy is melted; the hardness of sin-bound hearts vanishes away. One chases a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight. Here is the philosophy of Christian aggression, the secret of all past Christian conquests. If ever the yet remaining heathen are to be reached, and Christianity become the world's religion, it will not be by argument, or by speculation, or any kind of guess-work, but by the old gospel process of bringing men to God through Christ, and so instating within them the Christian consciousness.

The guarantee of Christianity's perpetuity, then, is found in her own supernatural life. The great Defender of the Faith is God. As long as he answers prayer offered in the name of Jesus; as long as, through Christ, he inducts men into conscious communion with himself, so long will men believe in Christianity. As long as men show the

possession of the normal Christian consciousness, so long will other men yearn to possess it also. On the other hand, were this perpetual divine vindication of the system to cease, not all the arguments of all the libraries of Christian apology could keep the faith alive a single generation.

All history but repeats the scene enacted seven and twenty centuries ago, upon a sea overlooking the hill-top of Northern Palestine. As there and then, so through the age-long life of man, false altars and false priests have stood confronting and opposing God's. As there and then, however, so always and everywhere, observant humanity has watched and waited for the God "that answereth by fire." And whensoever on inner or on outer altar, at the prayer of any true prophet, the fire has fallen, even the onlooking world have lifted multitudinous voices with the awed yet glad confession: "THE LORD HE IS GOD, THE LORD HE IS GOD."

IV.

MORAL LAW AS REVELATION.

MEN are naturally both religious and ethical. They need truth in reference to God and in reference to duty; and under the impulse of their own nature and the general movement of Divine Providence, they will feel after God, and inquire for duty and right. Such truth is seen or felt to be a condition of satisfaction and happiness, as food and clothing are essential to physical comfort and well-being. This want might not be distinctly recognized in the consciousness of every man, or there might be no distinct apprehension of the occasion of the uneasiness or the unrest, which is the instinctive outreaching of the soul for substantial truth and good; yet, here and there, in almost every community and people, this want finds an utterance. Some soul, moved by a deeper experience than that of others, has felt and expressed the want, and the rest have responded. The utterance is the interpretation of their own experience which they had failed to analyze. It is indeed conceivable, that a tribe or people may be so depressed in their life, so occupied with the meaner wants of their nature, as never to have recognized this spiritual want, established forms

of religion, or settled any principles of morality. But such a fact is exceptional, if it exists at all. The general result in human experience is, that there is a struggle after objects of religious faith, and a standard of character, and some attainment in both directions.

There is no room to doubt, that some knowledge, both of religion and morality, is naturally attainable by men. Paul spoke to the Athenians of the encouragement to seek the Lord, to feel after him, and *find* him; and again, speaking of the light pertaining to God, which is afforded to all men, he says: "For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made, so that they are without excuse"; and the corrupt ideas of God, which men have cherished, he attributes to the dishonesty of their own hearts,— their unwillingness to practise the truth they know. This view is sustained by the facts of human experience. In all ages and among all people, some real knowledge of God has found lodgment in the most earnest souls, and has been imparted by them to others; and since the human soul is naturally adapted to the recognition and acceptance of God, as the child is constituted to know and accept the parent, the wonder is, that the darkness of the world has been so dense, the light so feeble and uncertain. When Socrates presented a few clear and simple thoughts to the Athenians, in reference to God's being and providence, instead of embracing him as a teacher and prophet, bringing the truth which their souls thirsted for, they put

him to death for introducing strange divinities into the state. Paul's experience among the same people, five hundred years later, was less tragic, but scarcely more encouraging. His judgment in reference to the unbelieving world was that "they did not like to retain God in their knowledge."

The latest results of researches into the religious history of man would seem to indicate that the movement, among the vast masses of mankind, has been from light, more or less distinct, to darkness, in reference to the being and nature of God; that far back in the history of the principal races, one God was known and worshipped,— a personal being, of infinite excellence, creator and ruler of men; and that this original monotheistic view gradually gave place to polytheism, pantheism, or atheism.

The oldest records of the Chinese recognize a personal God,— a supreme intelligence to whom all things are known, who approves of righteousness and hates iniquity. This pure conception lapsed finally into a philosophical abstraction, which represents the primal principle as absolute emptiness. Confucianism, which has ruled the Chinese thought for twenty-three hundred years, drops out all thought of God, and proposes Ancestors as the proper object of the natural instinct of reverence and worship. The result is, that Confucius himself, as the most distinguished among these Ancestors, has many hundred temples erected to his name, one of them covering ten acres of ground; and at the semi-annual festivals, seventy thousand animals are offered to his memory, and twenty-seven thousand pieces of silk are burned on his altars.

The course of religious thought among the Hindoos has been much the same. Their oldest Vedas speak of a supreme Spirit, "who, through his power, is the only King of the breathing and awakening world, who governs all, both man and beast." This monotheistic view degenerates at length into Brahminism, an empty and aimless pantheism; and this again, by a reaction, into Buddhism, which knows no God but the Buddha, a deified man; and the grossest idolatry is the result of all.

In Persia, religious thought, under the hand of Zŏroáster, took the form of Dualism, involving the existence and conflict of two powers, of Good and Evil. Yet, there are traces of a Monotheism still back of this, which finally yielded to the worship of the host of heaven and to the fire-worship of later times.

The Egyptians worshipped a multitude of gods as far back as their distinctive religion can be traced; and yet there are indications that this gross and all-pervading polytheism was a reaction from Asiatic pantheism; and this, again, a derivation from an older Monotheism which characterized the original people of Central Asia.

The Greeks and Romans, springing from the same Asiatic centre, left behind them the spiritual conception of the Deity, and multiplied their gods, to correspond with the forces of nature and with the objects of interest in personal, in social, and in civil life, giving them characters answering to their own,— stern and grave and virtuous, or trifling and gay and wanton, according to their own inclinations; all this, too, in connection with such attainments in

philosophy, in literature, and in art, as have made them the admiration of all the later nations. Their philosophy, indeed, carried along, side by side with this polytheism, lofty ideas of God as a personal and spiritual being. Socrates and Plato and Aristotle brought back the true thought of God; but it was never accepted in the life of the people, and the philosophy itself at length degenerated into the pantheism of the Stoics and the practical atheism of the Epicureans. These great facts in human experience show what we may expect from the instincts of human nature, however elevated they may be, and correspond with the declarations of Paul in reference to the course of men as to the knowledge of God: "Because, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations and their foolish heart was darkened;" "Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever."

All this does not prove that the human soul has not, in its nature, a reaching after God the Creator, the infinite Father, in whom we live and move and have our being, and that men do not recognize his claims when he lays his commands upon them. All these vain imaginings must fly, at God's personal approach, as shadows of the night, when the morning comes. They are only such stuff as dreams are made of. But these facts do indicate that God must come down to men, and that men will not rise to God. Their religious nature does not guide them to the truth.

The leading principles of morals would seem to be more fully within the reach of men, in their natural experience, than the great facts of God's being and government. These principles are strictly rational, apprehended by the human intelligence as truly as the axioms of mathematics. God and our neighbor being known, the obligation to respect their being and regard their welfare cannot be unknown. Every human being must know that he ought to love God and his fellow-men. He may not be able to put his thought into that exact form, but in a thousand ways he shows that he understands the duty. This knowledge of the great principle of right and wrong is brought out in all human experience.

In particular cases and questions of duty, men differ, because judgments differ in reference to the bearing and tendency of particular courses of action. Not only do the enlightened and the thoughtful dissent from the unenlightened, but the best-informed and most conscientious, from each other. This variance, however, is not in reference to the great principle of duty, — the obligation to regard God and man, — but with respect to what that regard requires in the particular case. The Mohammedan and the Jew alike agree that God's commandments must be obeyed. The Jew recognizes the duty to observe as sacred the seventh day of the week. The Mahommedan knows no such command, and does not recognize the duty. Either following honestly his own light, would meet the divine will. One Christian accepts the command, "Repent, and be baptized," as requiring the observance of an out-

ward ordinance. Another accepts the command as referring only to an inward and spiritual cleansing; but both alike maintain the duty of implicit obedience to God, and each is accepted according to that he hath. One philanthropist holds that human life is too sacred a thing to sacrifice, even for the maintenance of law. Another holds that human life is so sacred as to call for every safeguard, and to warrant the infliction even of capital punishment for its protection. Neither ever questions the great duty of love to man. All such differences are in entire harmony with the acceptance of the same fundamental rule of righteousness,— a practical knowledge of the great principles of ethics.

A full and satisfactory *expression* of those principles is entirely a different thing. The knowledge comes by intuition; the expression, by reflection and discrimination. An elementary knowledge of duty, and a knowledge of the philosophy of duty, are different things, yet both are within the reach of the human understanding. Everywhere upon the face of the earth we find that men not only know essential duty, and hold themselves and others responsible for right conduct, but they have more or less complete expressions of that law of righteousness. Certainly it should not surprise us to find such expressions coming from the philosophers, the thinkers among men in every land and in every age. When Confucius gives us something like the golden rule of our Saviour, it is only what we might expect. That rule commends itself to the human understanding, and it is only natural

that the human mind, struggling for an expression of our intuitive knowledge of duty, should sometime attain that beautiful utterance. All men have some sense of the beauty of goodness and some aspiration for it; and it is only human, that this aspiration should now and then find expression in a prayer like that of Zŏroáster: "I desire, by my prayer, with uplifted hands, this joy,— the pure works of the Holy Spirit, a disposition to perform good actions, and pure gifts for both worlds, the bodily and the spiritual."

The great want of men has never been a knowledge of what ought to be done, but a heart to do what they know. There are none so dark in their understanding of duty that they could not do nobly if they would. This was Paul's infirmity. "I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but when I would do good, evil is present with me." This is the weakness of human nature. If, then, God should give to men a system of ethics, a revelation of right and duty, we might anticipate special provision for this human weakness,— such adaptations in the form of the law and in the conditions of its presentation as should furnish the motives to obedience which all men need. The world is suffering not so much for light as for love,— a disposition to welcome the light and walk in it. In the darkest portion of the world, the darkness is not so great that he who comes to the work with an honest and earnest heart, would not find the path of essential duty open to him. Indeed, the maintenance of that honest and earnest and truth-loving heart is the per-

formance of essential duty. It is the faith, without which it is impossible to please God; it is the love which fulfils the law. But here lies the grand difficulty,— how to persuade these dark-souled men to undertake this honest and truth-loving life. By this test is revealed the weakness of the philosophies, the moral systems, and the religions of the world in general. Our present inquiry is, whether the ethical system of the Christian Scriptures meets those human wants, in such a manner and to such a degree as to indicate an origin other than human? Have we in the Bible the law of God as distinguished from the results of mere human thought?

In this inquiry we assume that the Old and the New Testament present one and the same ethical system. Such is their claim and such is the fact. The Saviour, in his clearest utterances of the law of duty, claims to add nothing to the substance of that law as given by Moses and the prophets. He distinctly announces that his two commandments are only the summary of the older law, and even the very words of the first and great commandment, and of the second, which is like unto it, are given in the books of Moses, Deut. 6 : 5. "Thou shalt love the Lord the God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."—Lev. 19 :18. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." That there should be in the later Scriptures new applications of the law, is a necessity of progress in knowledge and experience among men. Such new applications we are still making, and must continue to make, as our range of thought extends and new lines of action open,

but the law is forever the same. Nothing can be added or taken away.

Let us contemplate this law in two particulars,— its *matter* or content, and the *manner* of its presentation: and in the light of these, inquire what are the indications as to its origin? Is it the product of human thought in its natural movements, or was it Divinely given? It may not be amiss to suggest, that while this question is one of grave importance, it is not fundamental in the sense that it involves the validity or binding force of the law. If this law carries with it evidence that it is according to truth, then it must stand and be accepted, whatever the source from which we obtain it. But if it comes from God, then it is the law of God, and there are new and stronger motives to obedience.

In its *matter*, the law enjoins the respect which is due to God and the respect which is due to man. It contemplates God as having interests and rights which his creatures are to regard. He occupies the place of a ruler and a father, and all the interests and rights of a ruler and a father pertain to him. His honor is valuable to himself, and important to the world. Hence, his creatures must render him the honor which is rightly his. To put another in his place, is a wrong to him, a trespass upon his interests and his rights, as well as an offence against his government,— a weakening of his authority with his creatures. On his own account, and for his own sake, we are to render him our reverence and our loyal obedience, because such a tribute is a good to him, an element in his blessedness. As a father,

he needs the love and confidence of his children. Such filial regard is a good to him. He asks it on his own account, as a human father seeks the love and confidence of his children. It is not simply that men may be blessed in rendering it, but that he himself may have the infinite satisfaction and blessedness of receiving. The *first* and *great* commandment is, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, because God's enjoyment of the love of his creatures is the highest conceivable good. The law directs our thought first to God, and places him first and foremost, because he is first and greatest and best; not because he is in the place of power, and can require such regard, but because he is first by the infinite excellence and greatness of his being. Hence the demand is reasonable and just,— the only proper expression of duty.

It is unquestionably true, that such honor and love to God are the prime condition of the well-being of the creatures of God, and it is conceivable that the duty might be enjoined on this ground. But love to God is the condition of good to men, because it is in itself so reasonable and just. If there were no natural ground for the duty to God on his own account, it never could be made the essential condition of our well-being. The law is not, place God first and foremost in love and honor because thus only canst thou be blest; but love and honor him because this is his right and his due.

In all these declarations and requirements of duty to God, there is no carefulness to guard against the

idea that he needs our love and delights in it with infinite delight,— no intimation that while it is our duty to render this regard, he is so exalted in his nature that our grateful love cannot reach him. On the contrary, we are led on to the conviction that in the depth of the riches of his being there is complete appreciation of the tribute which his humblest creature brings, and a want when that tribute is withheld. To fail in this duty is a wrong done first to God, and next to our own souls. The first and great commandment has an everlasting basis in the nature of God, and is sustained and enforced by the reason of man.

But other beings have their interests, their rights and claims. It would be human to stop with the enunciation of this first and great commandment. God is so great, and his rights and claims so clearly paramount, that all other beings may be forgotten. If God be honored, all is well; nothing further can be required. Thus human wisdom has often reasoned. Not so, the law as given to Israel. By the side of this great commandment, there stands the second, like unto it, namely this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." *Like unto it*, because it rests on the same foundation of natural interests and rights. Our neighbor's well-being is a good which has its claims upon our regard,— a good as valuable as our own. Hence we are to give him his place by our side on the common platform of humanity. He may be a stranger, or even an enemy; the obligation stands in all its force, and these extreme cases are presented as a test of the genuineness of neighborly

love. "Love ye the stranger, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." Our neighbor is a brother man; not one who is agreeable to us by his character, or dear to us by natural ties, but one who shares our humanity, — this breathing, sentient nature, with its capacities and its wants. His interests and rights are commended to our regard on account of their own value, and for his sake, — not because we bless ourselves in the performance of this neighborly duty, or find our own happiness in giving to others their place. Such a result will unquestionably follow; he that loseth his life, shall keep it evermore; but it is not losing one's life to place it ever foremost in the service rendered to others. The law is not, love thyself by loving thy neighbor, but love thy neighbor as thyself. He has his rights, as we have ours, and we are to give them place. On the same ground upon which honor is due to God, rests our duty to man, and God places himself side by side with man in the presentation of his claims.

Again, the second commandment is *like* the first, because the same state of heart fulfils them both. The just and honest heart render both to God and to man their dues, and one of these commandments cannot be fulfilled without fulfilling the other. Love to God is even tested by the fact of love to man; "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" The love to God which passes by man, is a counterfeit and a delusion, and the love to man which forgets God, is equally so. This is divine wisdom and insight, — luminous to the human intelligence, when

once presented; but when did mere human wisdom ever attain it? Brahminism has stumbled on one side, giving us a piety as empty and soulless as space; and Buddhism and Confucianism on the other, presenting a powerless and lifeless morality. The Divine Law solves the problem, making genuine piety and morality one and the same thing. Each involves the other.

Let us remember, too, that obedience to this law is a spiritual service. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart." "Love is the fulfilling of the law." What God requires is the service of the heart. No ritualistic forms, however elaborate, can meet his will; no wealth of sacrifice, no ascetic observance or self-immolation. To the anxious worshipper who inquires, Wherewith shall I come before the Lord and bow myself before the high God? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression; the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" The startling answer comes: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God?" Thus the meanest, the most ignorant, and the poorest of his creatures may perfectly meet his will. As luminous as the sunlight is this divine law, with the truth, that genuine character is what pleases God; that "truth in the inward parts" commends the soul to his approval, and that every outward form or inward exercise, apart from this essential righteousness, is vain and

worthless. In this grand characteristic, the Sacred Scriptures stand alone among the religious systems of the world. Brahminism speaks approvingly of righteousness of character, but places formal observances and ascetic practices foremost in the work of making merit, and bringing the soul to everlasting rest. "Devotion is equal to the performance of all duties." "He who has killed a cow, must wait all day on a herd of cows and stand inhaling the dust raised by their hoofs. At night, he must sit near and guard them. He must stand while they stand, follow when they move, and lie down near them when they lie down. By thus waiting on a herd for three months, he atones for his guilt." "He who can repeat the whole of the Rig-Veda would be free from guilt even if he had killed the inhabitants of the three worlds."

Buddhism represents one of its saints as giving his body for food to a starved tigress, and thus attaining at once the everlasting rest without the necessity of countless transmigrations. The virtue of the act was not so much in the pity for the brute, as in the self-abnegation. Errors like these are human, and Christianity itself, in its actual exhibitions, has often been disfigured by this human blunder. But no such darkness dims the heavenly light. The divine law utters no uncertain sound. "Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head like a bulrush, and spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Will ye call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen,

to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"—Isa. 58 : 5–7. And then, lest the mere outward performance be mistaken for obedience, we read again: "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing."—I Cor. 13 : 3.

Again, because this law is spiritual, reading the thought and intent of the heart, it is universal,— all comprehensive, embracing all rational beings, in whatever world, and extending to every thought and word and deed. There is no attempt to lay out in detail the duty of any being. The law brings its force to bear upon the very fountain of action, and makes it pure; then pure streams must flow through all the channels of life. The form of action will vary with varying light and changing relations, but the obedient spirit is always the same. The simplest child that lisps: "Our Father which art in Heaven," and the loftiest angel that bows within the very circle of his glory, are one in spirit, children of the Heavenly Father, alike approved of him. In the same great law they find the rule of life and action. It meets the want of the least and the greatest, and can never be outgrown. Even God who proclaims the law, commends himself to his creatures as embodying in his action the principle of the law. "Shall

not the Judge of all the earth do right?" "A God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he." The holiness of God is but the love which he requires of his creatures. Thus, under this law, the universe becomes a kingdom of righteousness and love,— the Sovereign himself leading the way in the works of love which the law requires, heaven and earth and hell bearing witness to the beneficence of his sway. This conception is too high for the unaided human reason to reach, but it is not too high for the human soul to accept and rejoice in. Such a law can never grow old; it is as fresh and vital now as when it fell upon the awe-struck tribes at Sinai. It is the absolute righteousness, valid for time and for eternity.

That there were temporary and specific precepts associated from time to time with these great, unchanging principles, rather strengthens than weakens the argument. Out of the great central principle, specific and local applications must always arise. The excellence of the law is, that it is capable of these specific adaptations, and provides for them. Special observances and forms of worship are arranged for those that need them; but, from first to last, there is care to distinguish between every formal observance and the obedience of the heart. "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams." No ambiguity on this point is ever admitted. From the beginning to the end, a line of heavenly light runs between the essential and unchanging, and the formal and temporary.

A complete presentation of the case would seem to require an examination of the specific provisions of the law, and an exhibition of the divine wisdom which characterizes them. Such a work lies beyond the limits prescribed by this occasion. Our present view must be general, and therefore less satisfactory. An allusion to a single specific precept must suffice, that which prohibits the use of images, — a precept appropriate to men in every age and condition, forbidding the worship of God under any form of nature, or any image of "gold or silver or stone, graven by art or man's device." Yet the law given to the people of Israel is distinguished from all other ancient religions by this prohibition. The fire-worship of the Persians was still idolatry, though perhaps less degrading than the grosser practices of other nations, "who changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. To meet the weakness of human nature in its effort to embrace the Infinite Spirit, and to save men from the loathsome degradation of idolatry was the problem solved by the system of worship and of morals prescribed to the children of Abraham. Was the wisdom which devised it simply human?

In its *matter*, then, we find this ancient law satisfactory and complete,— as appropriate to-day as at its first announcement, and never to fail, though heaven and earth pass away. Let us now inquire, what there is in the *form* and *manner* of its presentation which distinguishes it from other systems of morality and religion, and which indicates a divine

origin? In this direction, there are two particulars specially prominent.

In the *first* place, the law presents the great objects upon which obligation terminates, in a definite and vital form. The thought is directed to God and to our neighbor, — beings whom we know and whose nature we can understand though we may not comprehend it. All duty, all obligation, finds its object within this circle of our vision. Duty thus takes a definite and tangible form. We are not set upon any vague and uncertain pursuit, left to range the universe to find where the path of duty lies, or where are the objects to which our obligation leads us. We know at once who has claims upon us, and what the nature of that claim must be. Our neighbor is our brother, and God is our Father; we bear the image of both. In the light of our own nature, we understand our duty to man and to God. What the love is which fulfils the law, — the attitude of soul which is right toward God and toward man, we cannot doubt.

If human wisdom had framed the precept, it would probably have taken the abstract form: "Thou art a reasonable being; obey the law of thy higher nature; act reasonably; do right for its own sake"; and thus bewildered human creatures would have been left, with introverted gaze, peering into the depths of their own consciousness for light upon the question of the reasonable and the right. All such abstract statements are provided for in the present concrete form of the law. The law embraces every such principle, and covers every conceivable duty of all

beings for all time, and makes the way of duty as luminous as the light of heaven. It takes the thought, at once, away from self, first to God and then to man, providing for a true and wholesome activity.

But beyond this, in the objects presented to our regard, we find the motives to obedience which the human soul requires. The nature of these objects appeals to our hearts. Over us bends the Father of Spirits, infinite in his excellence and all-embracing in his love,— the Lord our God, whom we are to love with all the heart. How reasonable and just the duty! How strong the claim, and what motives, in the excellence and majesty of his being, for a response to that claim! By our side stands our neighbor, encompassed with all human infirmity and want,— child of the same Father, with a vital, sentient nature like our own, calling for our neighborly regard by the significance of his present experience and the reach of his destiny; and again the law comes: "Love him as thyself." In the objects thus presented, we have the highest motives to obedience. There is divine wisdom in so shaping the law as to bring these motives in full force upon the soul. How feeble and cold, in comparison, is any abstract utterance of human philosophy,— be reasonable, be just, do right, respect every interest, regard all being. Living, vital motives, we have seen, are the great want in any moral system, and the divine law takes hold of the heart by this direct presentation of the objects of duty.

The *second* feature in the manner of presentation

is, that the principle of obligation is made a divine command, and comes to men not merely as an attainment of human thought, an axiom which the reason intuitively affirms in its own cold light, but as enacted by divine authority, and enforced by the personal power of a present God. Moses and the prophets of Judaism and Christianity do not stand before the people as gifted with a clearer insight, a genius for religion or an ethical inspiration, by which they discern the great principle of obligation. They bring to men the law of God's kingdom, the express will of Jehovah, and it comes with all the force which divine authority can give it. It was not enough that God endowed men with an ethical nature,— reason to understand the principle of duty as they know all necessary truth, — then to leave them to follow their own natural light. It is undoubtedly true, as Paul has announced, that those who have not the law are a law unto themselves, showing the enactments of the law written upon their hearts. But how feeble is this natural sense of duty, compared with the impression which the express will of God conveys, with all the force of his majesty and authority, his fatherly prerogative and his yearning love!

Back of this presentation of duty as divine law, there stands the great fact of God's personality; a fact which was essentially lost to the other nations, but which was the basis of all religious thought among the Hebrews. They are taught to regard God as the Creator, and themselves as the work of his hand; not an emanation from some uncon-

scious, sleeping divinity, from whom they sprang without his purpose, as dreams gather about one who sleeps; not the work of some intermediate power, by which they were separated from the knowledge or regard of the eternal, self-existent God. Of such ideas the world was full. India and Persia and Egypt could have furnished such conceptions of God, and such only. But to the Hebrew thought, God was presented full of active, intelligent, and sensitive life. He had "made the heavens and earth and sea and all that in them is," with a definite and settled purpose; he still ruled in the kingdom of heaven and in the kingdom of men, and often revealed himself in mighty displays of his presence; using the powers of nature as his servants, going before the people in the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night; leading them through the wilderness as the shepherd his flock, — intensely interested in their character and condition, claiming their love as a good to himself, and from his open hand scattering blessings in return. From this Sovereign, Father and Friend, comes the law to them and to mankind, — the will of the high and lofty One who inhabits eternity; and who dwells, too, with the humble and contrite spirit. Such a law is no mere system of ethics, no human philosophy, but a divine religion, taking hold of the hearts of men with all the force with which God appeals to our religious nature. Men are naturally religious. The impulse of reverence and worship is stronger and more lasting than any other, except the mere animal instincts and passions. In the world, gen-

erally, the religious tendency was wholly separated from morality. Men worshipped with costly sacrifices and painful observances and penances, not with a loving and contrite heart, dutiful to God and benevolent toward man. Duty to God was utterly divorced from the claims of men, so that these claims were rather counteracted than sustained by the claims of religion. It is probably true that religion, even in this impulsive form, with the ethical element wholly eliminated, counteracted, in some degree, the gross animal impulses, and saved from the loathsome degradation of mere animal life; so that it is reasonable to say that Paganism, with all its idolatry, is better than no religion.

But it was no mere human thought that bound religion and morality together by an indissoluble bond, placing the claims of God and the claims of man on a common foundation, making religion morality, and morality religion, and enforcing the common duty by all the motives which appeal to man's religious nature. Religion, without morality, is a blind force, working mightily, but not beneficently. Morality, without religion, is feeble and mechanical and hopeless. Combined, they constitute the true human life which pleases God and blesses man. Where, in the history of the race, have they been bound together and made one, as in this perfect law of the sacred Scriptures; and by what mightier motive could such a law be enforced? "I am Jehovah, thy God, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. Thou shalt have no other gods before me." "Thou shalt not avenge nor bear any grudge against

the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am Jehovah." All the power which the thought of God has over the hearts of men, is brought to bear in the enforcement of this common duty, of love to God and love to man. How much stronger is the motive than that which comes with the simple apprehension of the duty by one's own understanding! For the child to know by his own judgment what is proper for him to do, is one thing; to have added to that perception all the force which comes with the personal presence and benign authority of the parent, is a very different thing; and this only feebly illustrates the power of religious motives over the consciences and the hearts of men. Coming from God, the law naturally and inevitably takes this form. If it came from man, its form remains without explanation, — it has no natural origin.

It has sometimes been a matter of surprise that in connection with the law in the Old Testament, so little reference is made, or, as some claim, none at all, to the considerations of a future life,— that no motives to obedience are drawn from the world to come. But let us consider that in God's personal presence all interests are brought together. The seen and the unseen world are the same to him,— all "naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." To one who realizes God's presence, the oneness of his kingdom is a simple fact. The people of Israel were taught, in obedience, to expect God's favor; in disobedience, to dread his frown. That favor meant life, all that men hope for, and

his frown meant death, all that men dread, wherever in the universe his power extends. Under God's direct eye, as they seemed to be, it would not be natural or important to discriminate between the seen and the unseen world. The law was God's law, and carried with it all the motives which gather about the relations of men to God.

We have thus seen, that in its matter the ethical system of the Scriptures involves the absolute morality and the absolute religion; that it was complete in its first announcement, and has been extended in the later Scriptures only by new applications, — not by any addition to its principles. Other systems indicate a struggle of the human soul toward the apprehension of those ideas, and when they make any approximation to this standard, we are led to rejoice that men in the dark places of the earth have had somewhat of the true light; but this law has stood, and must forever stand, as the model by which all other systems are to be judged. When human philosophy shall have attained to the most catholic expression of the law under which man is placed by his nature and relations, shall have collated and generalized all systems and all forms of thought for the expression of absolute truth, the product can be only that which we have in the Scriptures, and which comes to us as the voice of God,— the first and great commandment, and the second, which is like unto it.

We have seen that in its manner and form of presentation, this law meets the great human want of motives to obedience, combining and concentrating

all the considerations of religion and humanity, and impressing itself upon the deepest and most permanent elements of human nature, thus becoming the law written on the heart. To the full establishment of this law among men, the whole course of divine providence seems to have been directed. The Saviour's work in the world had this significance. His words, such as man never spake, were a restatement of the precepts of the law; his life was an embodiment of its purity, and his death so reinforced by its power the weakness of the law, that we are permitted to see its righteousness fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Well might he say, I came not to destroy the law but to fulfil!

Whence, then, is this law? from heaven or of men? If we say, of men, the law will then not be invalidated. It must still stand the complete and perfect expression of duty, — the law for all being and all time. But we propose to ourselves a problem difficult of solution, when we limit ourselves to such conditions. How is it that this marvellous combination of religion and humanity sprung up among the people of Israel, at the time of their deliverance from the bondage of Egypt, and held its place from that day on; and that, to-day, all nations are compelled to accept it as the ultimate and absolute truth in morality and religion? Can we name any human source from which Moses obtained this law, or can we account for any such quickening of the religious and ethical sense of that people as to yield us the marvellous product? This law was not one of the treasures gathered, when the people

"spoiled the Egyptians." Egypt had no such treasure to give them. What the Egyptians thought and said of God and man for a thousand years before, and a thousand years after, we read to-day upon their temples and their tombs. Moses was learned in all their wisdom; but the law of Moses is not the wisdom of Egypt. The people set forth the wisdom of Egypt, when they bowed to the Molten Calf, and said: "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. The mummied bulls of Memphis show where the people got that lesson. This was what Egypt gave them. The Vedas and the Zend-avestas of the farther East, giving the concentrated wisdom of India and of Persia, afford no light upon the subject. Those ancient writings exhibit the uncertain feeling after truth which naturally characterizes the human soul, with now and then a flash of light out of the darkness; but no steady luminary to which the nations may look, rises in that eastern sky. The star seen by the Wise Men of the East stood over the manger where He was cradled who was born King of the Jews.

The law which the Sacred Scriptures embody is beyond all question the law of God. If he should speak to men from heaven to show them their duty and enforce the obligation, he would give us no other law. There is no other law in heaven to be given. When, then, we accept it as God's law, uttered by his voice and written by his finger, we are sustained, not only by the testimony of Moses and the people, but by all the inherent probabilities of the case.

V.

THE INCARNATION.

BY TRUMAN M. POST, D. D.

ALL things are of God. The moral forces of the universe are in Him. To evolve and apply these forces, is its great moral problem; to bring the creature into sympathy with the Creator, the great measure for its moral restoration and perfection.

To effect this, God must reveal himself; and to a race embraced within a world of sense, He must reveal himself in the visible and sensible:

There are three ways in which God may disclose himself in the visible and sensible: *First*, In the fixed order of nature, or by the system of immutable laws: *Second*, By the interruption or transcending of those laws, in attestation of a verbal revelation: *Third*, By personal representation, attested in like manner.

Combining with all these, and supplementing or modifying them, is the disclosure of God in our moral consciousness. This, combined with the first above mentioned, or the disclosure of God by fixed laws, makes the religion of nature; and this, perverted and corrupted by human imagination, passion, and pravity, constitutes that of the heathen world.

Its combination with the second gives us the Hebrew system. Its blending with the third appears in Christianity.

The incarnation of the Son of God, or the revelation of the divine nature in a human person, is the peculiar distinction of Christianity. The *superior efficiency* of that revelation for the moral renovation and perfection of man, as demonstrated by history and the philosophy of mind, goes far to prove the divine original of that religion of which it is the distinctive and capital characteristic. This is the scope of my present argument.

My theme is, The incarnation of the Son of God as the great restorative and conservative moral force of the world.

The Christian doctrine of the incarnation has no analogue amongst the religions of the world. In moral aspect and significance entirely aloof from the Avatars or incarnations of Brahminism or Buddhism and the like, it stands in Christianity unique and alone. My argument claims that this is one of those doctrines that both vindicate themselves and the systems to which they belong; one which, not invented or discovered by human reason, yet approves itself, when announced, to our reason, as peculiarly adapted and requisite to accomplish the moral salvation of our race; and that its adaptation to effect this, the highest aim of *all* religions, is of force to establish the truth of that in which alone it is found.

My argument assumes the existence of a God, rational and moral; and infers, from a perceived fitness of things to produce rational and beneficent results,

their origin from Him. It applies this reasoning to the scheme of moral forces in Christianity, and especially to the doctrine of the incarnation. And thus, as the demonstrated adaptation of the law of gravitation to preserve the order of the natural universe argues its reality, so indications of the adaptation of the incarnation to restore and conserve the order of the moral world, may, to the extent they are disclosed, be reasonably regarded as furnishing a presumption of its truth.

We argue, accordingly, that as presenting the profoundest philosophy of the redemption of fallen man, and as being clearly a "wisdom and power unto salvation," as unique as it is requisite, this doctrine proves itself to be of God; and the more so, as it was first promulgated by those who were not philosophers, and who had no consciousness or ambition of philosophic system.

As already intimated, my argument will regard *the incarnation as the veritable revelation of God in a human person.* In thus defining, it will essay no sharp adjustment of controverted ontological or hypostatical relations of Christ to the Father. Into questions of correlation between them, or of the duality or singleness of natures in Christ, it is not requisite to my present aim to enter. But, avoiding philological or hermeneutical controversies, my argument will be predicated on that unity of Christ with God that the lowest interpretation of common Scripture statements seems to necessitate; a unity that presents Jesus Christ as veritably in himself a revelation of God.

Such a unity and such a revelation as seem of necessity implied in the declarations of the Evangelists, as in the first chapter of John: "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father. He hath declared Him." And again: "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." "And the world was made by Him." "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth." And again (Matt. 1: 27): "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." I mean such a *personal* revelation of God as seems implied in the declaration that Jesus was "the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person"; that "God hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ;" that "in Him dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily"; such a revelation as could justify Christ's own asseveration that his words and his works were not his own, but truly God's; and that "he who had seen Him, had seen the Father."

Now, language of this description, it seems to me, can imply nothing less than that Christ was, in his own person, in a sense which was true of no other in human form, a veritable revealer of God; not of God in the infinitude of his nature,—for the infinite cannot be revealed to or by the finite,—but

of God in the *quality of his moral attributes*, full of grace and truth, of pity, mercy, and love; such a revelation as would have power to transfigure our moral nature, so that we, "beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, should be changed into the same image, from glory to glory." Apart from the question of the truth or falsity of the Christian scheme, the *intent* of that scheme, it seems to me, unmistakably is, to set forth Christ as, to this extent, a personal revelation of God. To this intent, I shall argue.

My argument assumes also *a moral fall of man;* a fact as patent in nature and history, as in Scripture; and which, apart from all controverted dogmas of its origin, its depth or extent, clearly needs restoration and cure. The actual existence and prevalence of moral evil in our world needs no proof, and hardly more does the natural downward tendency of souls which have once admitted evil within themselves, and the consequent need of deliverance *by a power from without themselves*. My aim will be to show the natural efficiency of the revelation of God in a human person to accomplish such a deliverance, and the evidence thus accruing to Christianity, which presents this remedy for the moral malady of man.

This argument resolves itself into the following propositions: —

1. In order to salvation, *i. e.* in order to his highest excellency and bliss, man must be conformed morally to God.

2. Such conformity can be wrought in the soul only by sympathy with God, or the feeling of his

conscious personal presence applying itself directly to the soul.

3. Such sympathy can be created only by God's revelation of Himself.

1st. By a person, and

2d. By a human person,— *i. e.* one which, while representing truly the divine nature, is exhibited also as living, acting, speaking, feeling, suffering, under human limitations and conditions.

These propositions can be proved, both analytically and historically. We will consider,—

First, the necessity of conformity to God, morally, in order to salvation.

That to this end the soul must be in moral accord with God,— with that Being who is the fountain, the very element of its existence, in whom it must forever live, move, and have being; with the ever-present, all-pervading, all-embracing, eternally regnant spirit that must forever enfold it with its emotion, its will, and its power,—seems a proposition requiring no argument. Discrepancy with Him must inevitably be everlasting jangle and discord with the universe; a condition as hopeless of happiness as would be that of a man with his present physical nature immersed in the sun. God must, by the laws of being, be to a soul not conformed to Him a "consuming fire."

He must be so by the natural effect of mind acting on mind.

Mind acting on mind is the mightiest factor we know of in this life, of pleasure or pain; beyond all delights of sense, beyond all tortures of poison or steel or scourge or flame. From human hate or

scorn, men gladly hide in the very grave. So they exult to pluck the guerdon of love or fame, in the very jaws of death. What then must be the action of the mind of God, forever raying its emotion of love or abhorrence on the soul, but a Heaven or a Hell?

Moreover, in order to eternal life, man must be conformed to God as the perfect archetype of beauty and right; else the eternal necessity of our moral being, which unites virtue to happiness and vice to misery, must be broken.

Heaven is no sapphire city, no robes of white, no walls of amethyst and gold. It must be found in the soul's harmony with the All-good, the Almighty and the Everlasting. Else, nearer the blazing throne the worse; the soul would hurry to hide in the very shadow of death from the blasting beauty of God.

The light is beautiful, and sweet is it to the eye to behold the sun; but to the eye diseased, its beauty and sweetness become shafts of flame. Sweet is music; but to the ear diseased the most delicious strains ever borne on mortal airs grate torturing discord. So it must be to the soul of man in this universe not in accord with its Creator.

In the second place, *the power to secure this conformity* must be sought in the *divine nature itself*, revealed to man; not only as thus disclosing the paradigm to which the soul must be conformed, but also the forces to effect such conformity. God Himself is the mightiest of formative forces applied to the human soul. The God we worship ever forms us to his own image, be he Jehovah or Juggernaut, a Christ or a

Belial. The mightiest, certainly, if not the only power to restore the fallen soul, is in the evolution of the moral God, — the power to new-create, in the original creator. This evolution requires a *personal* revelation. Accordingly, to unfold and apply to souls his own idea through a revelation in a human person, is the *Christian scheme* of *salvation*.

In accordance with this aim it is noteworthy, the forces of that scheme are all eminently and characteristically *personal* rather than dogmatic. The universe is to be saved by a person, not a precept, a thesis, or a philosophy. Salvation is through faith in a person; is believing in, being in, abiding in, living or dying in, a person. It is putting on, being baptized into, confessing, serving, loving a person. The term Christianity is not found in the New Testament. It is faith in Christ. All is Christ. Impersonalities, abstractions, qualities separate from subjects, graces from persons, figure little. Prominent ever, over all its field of vision, is a living form, a face, a person. The whole system, its entire genius, looks personward. Everything in ritual and doctrine is adjusted and phrased to bring before the mind a person. This is the objective aim and view. The creed is ever the mere star-glass; Christ Himself, ever the morning star. Not an intellectual or ethical system, not a scheme of abstract graces and virtues, but a living soul, that wears all graces and virtues as his embodiment, and quickens through all with a life, — who is indeed self-styled as Himself "the way, the truth and the life," — is the Redeemer of the world.

In this way alone, through a person who is in the

bosom of the Father, was redemption practicable. For thus only could the saving forces which are in God be brought to apply themselves adequately to man's soul. God is a person. A person can be properly expressed or revealed only by a person. No abstractions could do it, no mere form of words, no dogma, no system. A soul is so separated from a mere attribute, is of such an entirely different order of existence, that it cannot be represented by it. Abstractions have no life in them, no warmth, no plastic power; mere unsubstantial phantasms or concepts of the mind. A religion consisting of them would be the most shadowy and powerless of things. To the million, the purely spiritual and infinite is simply inconceivable; and to the sage, equally an impracticable mystery.

A God attempted to be disclosed simply through these, could be no Saviour, certainly, of the mass; his gospel no gospel for the poor. They know and feel simply things in the concrete. They require sensuous imagery or embodiment. No mere philosophies or theologies are to them revelations of God, any more than a treatise on optics is light, or an analysis of colors is picture.

When I claim that God can be adequately revealed only by a person, I mean as I have premised, the living God, the moral God; something beyond a force, a principle, a dynamic element.

Those that use the term "God" to denote simply these, seem to me to violate the essential idea of the word, to use language nonsensically, and by a misnomer to convert an attribute into a substance, a predicate into a subject.

God, as a moral person, cannot be revealed by general laws further than as the mere operator of those laws. Reasoning from the consciousness of our own moral constitution to God as its author, we may believe God is a moral person, and as such dwells behind these laws. But the laws themselves disclose only a fixed order, that turns not aside for pity or love or justice, that never forgives, never relents; crushing alike whatever comes in its path, the innocent and lovely equally with the foul and the guilty.

It is true, God as a moral person may be *evidenced* by the visible arrest or interruption of those laws in the interest of truth, justice, or mercy, especially if, as in case of the Jews, such arrest and suspension are associated with voice and vision, authenticating law and verbal enunciation. But still it is God the infinite, the incomprehensible, the unapproachable, the ever-veiled; one *tokening* himself in signs and wonders, but hiding in the thick darkness or accessless light.

How dim and feeble such a disclosure; how inadequate to the wants and capacities, at least of the millions; how far beyond their reach of vivid, assimilative, conscious sympathy! They require to this end a visible person exhibiting the divine love and sympathy in life, action, and suffering.

No mere *verbal predication* of attributes suffices; although, such a revelation through a person, having once been made, words are competent to *perpetuate* it historically and doctrinally. On the basis of recorded and attested fact, the human mind can call up and continue to itself such a revelation, with the power

of present reality. The more especially may it do this with the preternatural aid of the Holy Spirit which the Christian scheme presents; and it is legitimate, in arguing that scheme, to argue from the standpoint of its own provisions. With the preternatural aid of the Divine Spirit promised to assist the conceptions of the human mind as a perpetual suggestion and continuation, so to speak, of the present Christ, our mind is certainly adequate, a personal revelation having been once made, to perpetuate that revelation in its thought and sentiment. But this revelation will tend in each mind to clothe itself with personal embodiment and feature, adapted to the experience, the idiosyncrasies, and the moral tastes and needs of the individual.

And here let us note the divine wisdom of the New Testament Revelation, in that while in Christ the moral God is clearly disclosed, the corporeal Christ is no where delineated. Of the mightiest, most glorious personage that has entered the circle of time, no picture, no statue, no trace, not even a hint historical, is left, whereby to frame a corporeal likeness.* Each mind is left to its own ideal, fashioned as it will be by its own moral taste or peculiar spiritual want, so that each human soul sees its own face of Christ; and while the historical Christ retires behind the darkness of the crucifixion or the ascension-cloud, the personal Christ still walks the earth with forever-open face, and as million-visaged as the ideals of the sons of men.

*I need not say, I regard the famous epistle of Publius Lentulus as a forgery.

And here again we note another of the peculiar moral forces of the Christian scheme. This personal Christ is no mere idealization of a dead sage, saint, or hero, no mere historic memory embodied, as of an Epaminondas or a Plato. He is no past personage. We go to no tomb to find Him. He lives evermore, and is conceived of as present, not only in thought, but in reality, to each and every soul, everywhere to the end of time; revealed to faith and love, though hid the while to sense.

Thus the glory of God in the face of a Christ, uneclipsed by time or death, is to shine forth on the earth as long as the sun, that face living and present to each and all of the sons of men, and beaming on them with a sympathy assimilating the human to the divine.

Thus we have what Plato desiderates in his Phædo; that very *form and face* of virtue, which, according to his thought, could it be seen by our bodily eyes, would excite in us a wonderful love, and captivate us with its beauty. But that which thus captivates is no mere abstraction or intellectual conception. Such breed in us no love, no enthusiasm, no assimilative sympathy. But what we have before us *is a purely and perfectly virtuous being*, in which all graces and excellences are but phases of a living soul; the loftiest, purest, sweetest, holiest Ideal realized, — the divine beauty incarnate, — the son of God. To draw men, through gazing on that face, into assimilative sympathy which shall transform the fallen soul into the image of its Maker, is the great aim of Christianity.

The restorative forces for such a soul evidently must be, as we have already indicated, from *without itself*. Once admitting sin within itself, it has come within a fatal circle, from which, left to itself, it will not escape. It must be delivered by being drawn into sympathy with a purer mind.

No theories or definitions of the good, the beautiful, the right or expedient, suffice. The great difficulty is not in intellect, but soul; not to define, but to induce pursuit; to create a loving and a choosing.

"*Video meliora proboque. Deteriora sequor*,"—

> "I see the good, and I approve it too;
> I know the wrong, and yet the wrong pursue,"—

is the self-recorded epitaph of the most brilliant and illumined intellects. "The good I would, I do not; the evil I would not, that I do," pictures the malady. Nor is it mere choosing that makes morality. It is the motive of the choice. The essence of virtue is the love of virtue itself.

This love is kindled in vision of a person, not a thesis or a philosophy or a paradigm. Life comes from life; from the action of soul on soul. We need that mysterious power, — earlier born than logic, swifter than induction, irresolvable by analysis, occult amidst the primal and ultimate elements of our being, which we call sympathy, — that wondrous power of life with life, assimilating, through interconsciousness, souls that are brought into communion; that makes us grow like to the face we gaze on; that shapes the infant countenance to the mother's smile, with almost its earliest look on the light.

By this influence, this extension of personality, the Creator transfigures created minds to his own likeness, and binds the moral universe to Himself. It extends, we believe, through all orders of being, a charm from the eternal mind through the lowest rank of ascending souls, drawing up all to himself; a chain, fastening all to his throne which, being sundered, the bands of moral order would break, and the moral universe sink to night and chaos.

This assimilative power of sympathy is mightier in proportion to the greatness and glory of the being into inter-consciousness with which the soul is drawn. Evidently, then, it is mightiest in communion with God. Now, whether or no we are authorized to predicate that no less force could arrest the fall of a soul and new-create it, it is clear that Christianity introduces the mightiest power in the universe for that purpose, in drawing man directly into sympathy with the divine nature.

But to secure this sympathy, it were not enough that Christianity revealed to us simply a personal God. It might simply disclose almighty, omniscient, and eternal justice watching over a world of sin. The mind that is to draw me into sympathy, must affect me, not only with a sense of its purity, beauty, and grandeur, but also of its kindness, its pity, its placableness, its readiness to forgive if I have offended. Terror and despair freeze up all sympathy. In order to enter into sympathy with God, I must feel, beyond all questionings, GOD LOVES ME, pities me, is ready to forgive me on repentance. Such sentiment must therefore be disclosed in the

person that reveals Him, else all the other attributes that should attract a sinless being will repel me as a sinner.

I surely need not pause to show how Christianity meets these requisitions; how the advent of the Son and Revealer of God was inaugurated with the angel-anthem of "Peace on earth, good will to men"; how the gospel opens with the prelude, "*God so loved the world*, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"; * how "the word was made flesh," and dwelt among men "full of grace and truth"; how full of gentle, loving, and healing offices his earthly life was, to all classes of earth's sufferers; how on the cross He poured out his soul, in "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do"; and how "He who was the brightness of Jehovah's glory, and the express image of his person, after He had himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on High," "where He ever liveth to *make intercession for us*."

It is the divine love that draws forth human love. "We love God because He first loved us."

Again, not only must the personage in which God is revealed present Him placable, loving, and forgiving, but also, in order to establish full and most potent sympathy between man and God, he must be truly a human person; that is, he must, while on the one hand presenting immanent in himself "the fulness of the Godhead bodily," so that the words spoken and the acts performed are not his, but those

*John 3: 16.

of Him who sent him, so that "He that hath seen Him hath seen the Father," in order that in dealing with Him men may feel they are dealing verily with God, — he must also, at the same time, be strictly and truly human and in human conditions.

God must come out of the infinite and reveal Himself in the finite. The representative personage must be presented subject to *liability* to pain, trial, temptation, and death, like others of human mold; else I cannot sympathize because I cannot understand; else the being is incomprehensible to me, is entirely beyond the range of my experience, and I can know a person only by the interpretation of my own consciousness. A person angelic, impassive, untemptable, is not the revelation I need. The mightiest factors of sympathy certainly were wanting in such an one; the divinest beauty of love through suffering, and of forgiveness through dying, were impossible.

Such a Christ could not have borne my sicknesses or sorrows, or suffered on the cross for me. Such a Christ I could not know, and therefore I could not know God, whom I must know through Him. I must, therefore, fail of eternal life; for the idea of eternal life without assimilation to God, is the most audacious and stupendous of absurdities. But conformity to God can be wrought only by sympathy with God, working us to affection and moral sentiment kindred to His own. But sympathy must be grounded on a conscious community or similarity of being. Only, by being like God, can I know God; only by having in myself a consciousness and experience interpreting the attributes predicated of God.

Such, indeed, is the law of all the knowledge of things. No words could ever explain to me the import of beauty or love, but through my previous consciousness of these emotions. Language is a reminder and a revival, not a creator, of ideas. So I can know God only through a consciousness kindred to his own, wrought in me by his embracing me in his sympathy; and this knowledge and sympathy can come only through a revelation in a human person, like my own.

Philosophy may postulate an impassive God. Into the awful profound opened by that question, I do not enter. I have no sounding line for its depths. But this is clearly written on my own nature; the being that is to draw me into sympathy must have emotion; the mediator through whom I am to be drawn, the person who is to represent and reveal God to my trust and love, must be *passible;* especially the Christ that is to win me most mightily to God, that is to enter most profoundly into my adoration, my love, my sympathy, must approach me with the divine sweetness of love shown in *sacrifice. The captain of my salvation must "be made perfect through suffering."*

It is clear that the idea of God such as philosophy postulates, as cased in adamantine order, working only by inflexible machinery of general laws, looking down from the ever-silent infinite with the face of a Fate, could not save a world like ours. A mind, over whose eternal deep no new emotion, whether of pain or pleasure, of indignation or love or pity, could ever ripple, from eternity to eternity; that

looks down with unchanged feature alike on a Judas or a Christ, a Borgia or a Howard; such a being is beyond my sympathy, beyond my prayer, above or beneath me by the breadth of a universe. For an assimilative and new-creative sympathy, humanity needs a Heavenly Father, a brother in the skies, and to feel the pulses of our human heart, of our human pity and love, beating from the divine breast.

Finally, amid the provision for moral force in the Christian system, I point to one which is coronal, and which effectuates all the rest; which intensifies and perpetuates the application of them to the soul. I mean the condition insisted on as requisite to salvation,— FAITH. This is no arbitrary requirement, as is sometimes charged. Its necessity lies in the very nature of things, the nature of mind and of salvation. It is the necessary means to the intromission into the soul of the transfiguring beauty of God that has been revealed in the face of Christ. Faith is the steadfast gaze of the soul on that beauty, a gaze intensified by trust and love, an immanent sense of inter-consciousness with the divine mind, mighty to change the soul from glory to glory, in the likeness of that which it looks upon.

Faith is the most potent applier of the truths of Christianity to minds, the clasp that binds the human heart to that of the Creator.

Such is the scheme of moral forces for the recovery of fallen minds which Christianity discloses, bound up in the revelation of God in a human person. Such the fitness of that wonderful person for the office required, at once revealing to us God the

Father, and gathering around that revelation the profoundest sympathies of human souls. He comes, who is in the bosom of the Father, to "show us the Father," "he in whom dwelt the fulness of the Godhead bodily, even the fulness of his mercy and love, to draw us, by that love, into a transforming sympathy with God.

He comes from out the infinite to meet the cry of humanity feeling after God, — "O God, Thou hast made us for Thee, and our heart cannot be quiet till it rests in Thee." He comes "who is the brightness of God's glory, and the express image of his person," to show us in himself the image and the glory.

Again: He comes as a human person, a brother; that he may show the divine beauty set in humanity; show the divine love through suffering; draw me into sympathy, through an inter-consciousness of temptation, grief, and pain, by bearing my sicknesses and sorrows, going before me through the death-shade, and by presenting that face in which shines the ineffable glory shaded for my sake in mortal agony, and stained with human tears: He, in whom the infinite is revealed in the finite; the impassible in the passible; the immortal in the mortal.

History demonstrates the superiority of this scheme as a means of moral restoration and renovation. First, over that of a revelation of God in nature, with its fixed order and immutable general laws, as in case of the ancient heathen world; and secondly, over that of a revelation of God by signs and wonders interrupting the fixed order of nature and attesting a verbal characterization of God, asso-

ciated with positive law and institute, as in case of the Hebrews.

First, history shows the impotency of a disclosure of God in nature, though supplemented and modified by that in the consciousness of the human soul, to create or conserve the moral purity of nations, or of men. Under this system the most gifted and cultivated races of the ancient world — though by the force of our human nature which cries out for a personal God, they impersonated general laws and abstract qualities, and so peopled the fixed order of nature with personal deities — found no permanent moral relief. With genius, culture, and science, philosophy, eloquence, poesy, political sagacity, and empire ministrant to it, — all, on a trial of ages, were found utterly inadequate to heal the moral maladies of humanity, or stay the march of society to the most foul and frightful corruption.

The brilliancy of their civilization shows speedily as the phosphorescence of decay, the intellectual illumination only making the darkness visible, of a movement it could not arrest, toward moral putrescence and social dissolution. The Greek in the Macedonian era, and the Latin under the Cæsars, show the hopeless failure of natural religion associated with the most rich and brilliant culture, as a corrective or conservative of private or social morality.

Secondly, In like manner, the Hebrew institute, with God manifesting Himself by special interventions amid fixed natural laws, and by the inspired utterances of law-giver, psalmist, and seer, and

perpetuating his memorial in distinctive social institutes and religious symbolism, was found, after ages of trial, incompetent to save even the chosen race from moral and political decay, much more to master and renovate the world. Save as a preparative and educational scheme, it was a failure.

But when in Jesus Christ God had revealed Himself in a human person and a human life, a new and wondrous moral power is clearly recognized by history, as entering the circle of human affairs. The charm of a divine beauty touched the heart of the world. A reformative and new-creative energy pulsated throughout it, from the depths to the heights.

This pulse still beats down the centuries, ever fresh and young. The outward aspects of the world have changed; political and social systems have come and gone; empires and civilizations have passed away; but the vitalizing, moral impulse then communicated is still undecayed and unconfined. It has been entangled and hindered by many alien forces; often mixed up and disguised with foreign elements; often confounded with dogmas that have grown obsolete; with modes of thought, feeling, and action that were adscititious, and have fallen away from the substantive essence; but the moral life-power that entered the world with the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, still lives, and still energizes more widely and more mightily in more human interests and human souls than at any period since the resurrection of Christ. On it is no mold of age, no taint of decay.

Spite of perversions and misdirections of adverse philosophies and theosophies, and of oppositions of science falsely so called, it has waited on humanity in all its progress, and become more thoroughly and profoundly incorporated with the life of the world, more and more inwrought into the organic and vitalizing forces of civilization.

The voice that inaugurated it eighteen centuries ago on the hills of Judea, as ushering in an era of peace and good will to men, has since expanded on earth, as it did then in the heavens, to the psalm of an innumerable host, an orchestral symphony of ages and nations, richer as it rolls along, with new-born truths and sciences and charities swelling its choral volume. It is obvious that whatever else may become merely things of the letter and pass away, the vision of the personal God in Christ, with its transfiguring charm, cannot perish from humanity without the perishing of the moral structure of the modern world.

God's most glorious gifts lose appreciation through wantage. Their value comes in the thought of their absence; that of life in thought of death; that of the sun in the thought it is never more to rise. Suppose, then, the fact of the incarnation were blotted out of the history of the world, how would it stand with its moral forces?

The manifestation of God in Christ vanishes like a strange dream. The ravishing sweetness of divine love, uttered through suffering, is become a beautiful delirium. Narazeth, Capernaum, Olivet disappear from the scenery of history, with that of the garden,

the cross, the city of light and the river of life. The face of ineffable love, the celestial effulgency softened to human sympathy, fades from the sky. The day grows dark and cold. The sun draws back his beams. Curtains of solemn and mysterious shadow fall. Humanity stands again under a sky of eternal fixed order — alone!

We are relegated to a God disclosed in the order of nature only. This is all our lesson, not only of a God of force, but of pity and love. All things run in the eternal groove of law; no arrest, no turning aside, no remission, no relenting, no forgiveness. A cold, impassive, adamantine order, without a flush or pulse or breath of life from eternity. And behind it, what? The Infinite, the absolute, the unknowable, the alone! This is all! With such names man looks after God. But who, and what, and where is He? A force? a principle? a phantasm? a conceit? Or is there an eternally marble face looking down on us through these skies of dreary order? A God, the mere operator of eternal necessity? Himself meshed in his own laws? The mere factor of inexorable fate?

What moral force? What life of love or liberty or hope or sympathy, what power unto repentance and renewal in that vision? A universe of soulless force, working through a system of infinite mechanism in the lines of everlasting, changeless law, where orbs glorious in brightness and grandeur, but voiceless and dead, roll on in never-erring orbits through abysses of eternal silence and death! I wander, endlessly, through the shining waste; I

shudder, I freeze, in its glittering solitudes. Its infinite order is my infinite despair. For I look, I long for life; for a token, a pulse of the living God. In vain. No heart beats in its infinite mechanism; no stir of life on its illimitable frozen deeps; no flush of love in the desolate splendors of its arctic skies.

Or if upon this background of infinite, lifeless order, my guilt or fancy or inference from self-consciousness bodies forth a personal deity, as in the case of the classic nations, what is He? A power of justice, whose moral laws are as relentless as those of nature, and thus shut out all sympathy as they do all hope? Or is He like myself, the victim of inexorable law? Is He impassive? or with passion too much like my own, who may by frail example allure me into conflict with that law, but cannot deliver me from its grasp?

I ask of history. She shows me the heart of humanity ever stirred in its profoundest consciousness with the feeling of a God,— its instinct of causality applied to nature and to itself, compelling it to feel after a creator; in the million, at least, after a God in the concrete, embodied and personal, and reflecting its own self-consciousness.

This self-consciousness I see stronger than philosophy, with its God cased in fate, and prisoned in law, and spite of that system peopling the universe with reflections of itself, with impersonations of sensuous beauty and might of passion and lust.

I see it crowding the heavens with myths, chill cloud-forms, beneath which humanity is congealed

into art, not warmed into virtue; or with tropic vapors, baleful, pestilential, thunderous, under which it grows palsied and gangrenous, or feverous and delirious. Forms sensual and seductive allure to voluptuous sin, or those malign or vengeful brandish their bolts over the pale nations, while they crouch, cower, and rush, swifter and more desperate to perdition. But no quickening moral power, no river of life flows from its Olympus; none to the superstitious millions who believed, much less to the sceptical philosophers who sneered at all this *personnel* voluptuous or malign as only mockeries called forth by human credulity on a background of eternal necessity.

Or again, in quest of a power of moral redemption, fly we to a God who arrests or bends the fixed order of nature at the behests of moral law, and by such interventions, and by verbal declaration and ordinance attested by them, makes enunciation of Himself? I am in the presence of the Hebrew institute. I am before Sinai, but the cloud hides Him. I am at the temple; the Shekinah veils Him. God, self-uttered through creation and law, here breaks through the fixed order of nature to speak to me, but his face is hid. I witness his tokens. I see "the brightness of his skirts." I hear the voice of the passing God. Through the *cleft* in nature, the Infinite, the Incomprehensible, the Ineffable, is glimpsed, passing before me with the proclamation of his moral attributes, "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth. I hear this proclamation borne down the ages by psalmists and prophet. "But lo! He

goeth by, and I see *Him* not. He passeth on also, and I perceive Him not." To this extent, no more, is the revelation of God. We have simply the WORD UTTERED, not "the WORD MADE FLESH."

We have a verbal characterization, the self-declaration of God, just, merciful, and forgiving to the penitent. But the mightiest forces to induce repentance are wanting. There is a sense of the presence of the Infinite, the Incomprehensible, the Just One. But the life-power of a revelation in a person, the transforming sympathy of an inter-consciousness with a human person, and that mightiest of all moral forces creative of spiritual renewal, the eloquence of divine love shown through suffering — these, alas, I find not! I find no sorrow-bearer, no sin-bearer, no Gethsemane, no cross, no ever-living presence of a divine sympathizer, a suffering Redeemer.

With many beneficent moral issues, quickening the moral sense of men, and presenting the norm of perfect righteousness still to the multitudes certainly little capable of dealing with the abstract and the purely spiritual, this revelation is no redemption. It is a disclosure rather than cure of the moral malady of man; a creator of terror more than of sympathy. It convicts only, not converts. It shows my guilt and summons me before the All-Just. No more.

Suppose it clearly offers salvation on repentance. Remorse is not repentance. Nor is fear of penalty, nor are right convictions of the good and true. It is turning the heart earnestly and lovingly to Him that is the ever good and true. But the mightiest charm to draw me thither, fails. The light of the glory of

God in the face of Jesus Christ, the radiance of divine love shining out through suffering, is quenched forever! Salvation on repentance; *on repentance!* "Ay, there's the rub," *Repent!* What can one do, when one cannot repent? Be drawn into *sympathy* with God! The attributes which should attract, repel, affright me, conscious of guilt. Tell me not of his holiness. It blasts me! Nor of his justice. That is my despair! His omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, eternity, they make the universe my dungeon. No flight or force avails me, nor the course of eternal ages. There is no hiding-place even in the shadow of death. Tell me not even of his *love*. That must guard virtue and vindicate its law, and "be it love or hate, to me alike it brings eternal pain."

Sympathize with such a God! With a power that destroys me? with a throne founded on my grave? a Nemesis that hunts me down eternity? with the glory and beauty of a God that impends over me like the face of the pitiless Dis? As well sympathize with the glory and beauty of Niagara as it bears me to the fatal plunge; with the cruel might of the abysmal ocean; with the earthquake that swallows me up; with the lightning that strikes me dead.

And this, the all of our revelation of God! of our illumination from Heaven! A revelation as when the red right hand stretches down through the folding darkness of the storm, and nature shudders beneath! The illumination of a burning world lit up by its own fires to the eternal judgment! Terror and despair freeze up all sympathy. A moral God is disclosed,

but for me, girt round with consuming effulgency. A Heaven is shown, but to me, its gates, like those of our lost Eden,

> "With dreadful faces thronged, and fiery arms."

I find myself under a system which of itself, unless supplemented by some further revelation, leaves me with no moral deliverance. My moral nature is still cold and dead. God is glorious, and the universe is beautiful. But I am helpless, hopeless, lost. I sink beneath the glory and the beauty, as the desperate swimmer sinks beneath the splendors of the nightly skies in the depths of ocean.

But now, as I look around in the very crisis of my despair, lo! the heavens are open. A wondrous person descends from the bosom of the Father, revealing the beauty of his unspeakable love in a human form, that wears for me mortality, and suffers and dies for me.

As I behold, a new spiritual power enfolds me. I find myself in a new universe. New life beats through my whole moral being. Divine love stooping to my nature, and proving itself through suffering, is mightier than my guilt, my fear, my despair. It subdues me to repentance, to faith, to hope, to love. It enravishes me, it transforms me. Cloud and darkness pass from before the throne. The emerald bow of peace engirds it. The intolerable brightness is shaded into the sweetness of human sympathy. Fiery cherub and flaming sword disappear. Wide flung are the gates of the City of God. Hands that were pierced for me, hold open its portals. One that has

redeemed me, and washed me from my sins in his own blood, that cried on the cross, "Father forgive," *bids* me come up thither — a saved soul.

I find, moreover, that the new moral life-power I feel within me, is pulsating through millions and through ages. I see, at the very crisis when history has demonstrated the failure of both schemes, — those of natural religion, or of mere verbal and legal revelation, in the most favorable circumstances of trial, — in this very despair of the world, when faith, virtue, and civilization seem in hopeless decay, when was least to be expected the ingress of a new moral power, such a power is manifested; — a power which works on through the eclipse of ancient civilization, and the wreck of the elder world, and, extending its living impulse through centuries of barbaric ruin and spiritual despotism, has become the vitalizing and organic element of modern society; a power which was never more youthful and potent than now; never more rapidly extending its new-creating force through barbarous races; never more deepening and broadening its domain in the intellect and heart of the civilized world, than at this hour; never more operative of social and personal reform and renovation; never more effective for the removal of vice, wretchedness, and violence within nations, or the establishment of the regimen of honor, truth, and benevolence between them; never more incorporate with the forces of progress, the life of civilization, and the hopes of humanity for its most illumined future.

To what can history or philosophy trace the origin of this new and strange moral life-power entering the

world at such a time? To what else than "the word made flesh"? — the revelation of God in a human person, touching the world with a sense of Divine love, breaking up its sensuous stupor and the paralysis of fear and despair, and throwing over it the plastic, assimilative charm of a Divine sympathy? This seems to me to present the only philosophical or historical solution of this phenomenon. Life comes from the perpetual appulse of the life of God. From out the desolate infinite, from out the unapproachable glory or the "ever-during cloud and dark," a face of Divine love ineffable has looked out on a fallen race. "God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." This is my only explanation of this wondrous phenomenon. Take this away, and the oracles of history and philosophy in the presence of the vastest fact of the past world are to me dumb.

VI.

THE FOURTH GOSPEL, — THE RECORD AND TESTIMONY OF THE INNER LIFE OF ITS AUTHOR.*

BY TIMOTHY DWIGHT, D. D.

AMONG the questions respecting the Fourth Gospel, which may be regarded as having been substantially determined, is that of its main design. Whenever and by whomsoever it was written, it was not intended to be a mere narrative, nor a work like the earlier or Synoptical Gospels. Its record of the life of Jesus was made, not for its own sake alone, — simply to tell the story of what he said and did and suffered, — but for an end outside of and beyond itself. That end is set forth in the

* In this lecture the author purposely turns aside from what are called the external evidences of the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel, and also from the evidences which are derived from the indications of the Apostle's personal (as we may say, *outward*) presence and participation in the scenes which he describes, and limits himself to a single line of thought, having reference to the *inner life* of the writer of the Gospel and the evidence which is drawn from that source. He, therefore, in some comparatively unimportant points, assumes, as already proved, certain things which, in a more general discussion, he would have felt called upon to establish by argument. There is no case of this kind, however, as he believes, where the assumption is at all essential, either to the main conclusion of the whole discussion, or to the particular argument in connection with which it is made. In the closing pages,— towards which all the preceding ones are made to point,— he calls attention to the argument for the truth of Christianity, which is suggested by the record of this inner life.

author's own language, in the closing verses of the twentieth chapter, as being the production of faith in Jesus as the Son of God, and, thus, the opening of the way of spiritual and immortal life to every reader. It is possible, indeed, that the writer may have wished to add to the statements which he found in the other histories; or, in some cases, to arrange the events in a more accurate order. Or, again, he may have had in view the errors of certain heretics and opposers, and may have desired to contradict or disprove them. Some have discovered, as they supposed, the evidences of these things. We do not care to deny the force of the arguments which they bring forward. The writer, however, — whatever may be said upon these points,— was not a controversialist contending against other opinions than his own, as if engaged in a doctrinal warfare; nor was he one who merely supplemented the deficiencies of others, or told a well-known story in a somewhat better form. His work has a tendency and aim which is manifest from the beginning to the end,— one which it never loses sight of,— one to which everything else, that may in any measure characterize it, is altogether subordinate,— *the one* which has just been mentioned.

Another point, which I think may be regarded as sufficiently settled, is, that, whoever the author was, or at whatever time he lived, he had some reference, in the phraseology of what is called his *prologue*, to the philosophical speculations by which he was surrounded. That the origin of the term Logos or its associated terms is to be found in the Old Testament

may be denied by some,— that they came from the Greek Philosophy may be rejected by others,—while there may be wide variations of views respecting the progress which the discussions of men upon these subjects may be supposed to have already made before the writing of this Gospel. But — without attempting, or considering it important for our present purpose, to determine the right one among these many opinions — there was, we may be sure, *a* connection between this remarkable introductory passage and the discussions of the time and place in which the author lived. The people around him — the educated people, at least — were talking, more or less, upon these subjects. The philosophical language of the day had adopted, to some extent, these forms of expression, and this writer knew them as thus adopted and employed.

If, now, we take these two points as already established, the bearing of the latter upon the former is such, as to show that the author, in carrying out his main design, was endeavoring to prove, not merely that Jesus was *a* revelation of God, or *the* revelation of God, but that he was *that* revelation of God which his contemporaries were blindly discoursing of, and seeking for. He was the Logos in truth,— God manifesting himself in the world. If they could be led to this belief, he was sure that all their questionings would cease, because the truth would then be beaming upon them, and the life of the soul, which their searching had never found, would follow in the line of faith.

But, even when we have gone thus far, as we may,

under the guidance of past investigation, we have not, as it appears to me, exhausted all that can be justly said. There is a third point, beyond the two already mentioned, to which I would direct especial thought, on the present occasion, and make it the starting-point of all that I have to urge. This Gospel bears within itself the evidence that its author, who either was, or, in the work which he was writing, personated the Apostle John, designed to give his narrative the appearance of having a very peculiar relation to that Apostle's own experience. I say, *a very peculiar relation*, and by this I mean something more than the fact that he was an eye-witness of the events described, or lived among them. There is an abundance of proofs that he intended this to appear to be the case. But there is something more than this. He meant to have his story apparently give the account of the way in which the new religious life of the apostle originated, and developed itself into strength and perfectness. His definite aim was, that his readers should suppose the Apostle himself to be telling them of the influences which had wrought in his own mind the belief that Jesus was, indeed, the Divine Logos.

The form and plan and method of his work were determined carefully on every side, and separated on every side from such simple narratives as the other evangelists had given. He wrote with the great *purpose* of establishing a certain truth. The *form of presentation* of that truth — and, so far forth, this was the occasion of his writing as he did — was due, wholly or partially, to the questionings

and speculations of men around him. The *mode of proving* to them the truth, which he adopted, was not that of argumentation, as in a doctrinal controversy, but that of relating the words and works of one who fulfilled the truth in his own person, and with whom he had himself been associated. The *reason for his adopting this method* was because his having been an eye and ear-witness of these works and words had convinced his own mind, and so he thought that the record of what he had known, would convince others also. And thus everything comes, in the last result, from his own personal experience of the truth and of faith in it. In other words, he approaches his fellow-countrymen — who were asking about the Logos, and discussing in this way and in that — with the statement, — I have seen him, who is the Logos indeed. Three years of intimate communion with him have brought to my mind this sure conviction. Come with me to the record of his life. Let me guide your way through it, as I have lived my way through it, from its beginning to its ending. Let me tell you how my faith, from my very earliest interview with him, grew gradually stronger with every new manifestation of his wonderful character and power, until it rose above all possibility of doubting. Let me open it before you till you have seen it all,— and I am sure that, if, by any means, you can be brought to appreciate the truth, or if you have within you any real susceptibility to the truth, you will have the same experience that I have had; you will believe as I have believed.

This Gospel loses half of its force without this

last-mentioned element; and its author well knew that it would. *He meant that it should appear as the Apostle's record of his own faith, and of the life of Jesus as producing and continually increasing that faith.* Let us look at some of the evidences that this is so.

I. In the first place, we notice in this Gospel, in a very remarkable degree, as compared with the other three, a bringing forward into prominence of the personality of its professed author, the Apostle. The earlier evangelists give sufficient indications that they were familiar with the events which they narrate. Matthew was an actor in them.* But neither the others nor even he, notwithstanding the fact that their histories were written long before this one, present to our view any one of the disciples of Jesus as the beloved disciple is here presented. He is made a kind of centre, around which, at one stage of the history after another, the actions gather themselves. The story begins and ends with the recording of impressions produced upon his mind. The friendship which he had with the Master is pressed upon the reader's attention again and again. In the intimate association of the twelve with Jesus and with one another, he stands out conspicuous, as comprehending the truth more deeply, and recognizing the Lord more fully. And, yet, there is no self-glorification in all this. There is, as we may say, no self-manifestation, in any offensive sense of the word. The prominence which he gives to himself is even

* See note on the first page of this lecture.

more peculiar in its character, than in its degree. He carefully hides his name, as if he would not be discovered, except by those who should determine his personality through gaining from the story the knowledge of his character. He loses himself in his testimony to his Divine teacher as truly as any of the other writers,—as truly, even, as if he had been the humblest and most unknown of that Teacher's followers. Nay, he even seems to know nothing but Christ, and cares for nothing beside, if so be that Christ is only believed in.

Now, how can we account for this double or two-sided phenomenon, as we may call it? It certainly is not in accordance with the character of one who, as the opponents of this Gospel claim with regard to its author, was taking up the labored defence of some doctrine which had developed itself after the time of Christ. The defender of a theological dogma or of a school could not have written in this way. Indeed, on the theory that the book is a theological treatise, this whole matter of the apostle's personality, in all its striking features, is altogether inexplicable. And just in proportion as we bring it, in our conceptions, nearer to such a treatise, just in that proportion do we involve ourselves in difficulties from this source. Nor, again, on the other hand, does it seem like the course of a man who merely repeats, in his old age, the stories of scenes which had a deep interest for him when he was young, or gives his personal testimony to what he heard when in the midst of those scenes, because he thinks what he then heard of great importance to mankind. Had this been all, he

might have done either of the two things which we have noticed. He might have made himself the all-important person in the narrative, or he might have withdrawn entirely behind the events. Under such circumstances, the impulse of men universally is to take one or the other of these courses. But this author combines them both, or, rather, pursues his pathway between them, in a manner which scarcely finds a parallel in all literature. The ordinary explanation given by the advocates of the genuineness of the book, though containing a part of the truth, will not, then, as I am persuaded, meet the peculiar demands of the case. It is reasonable, so far as it reaches, and therefore is not to be wholly rejected like that proposed by its opponents. But it needs supplementing, because it fails to give us complete satisfaction. So soon, however, as we recognize the other element to which we have alluded, and find its presence in the author's mind and purpose when he writes, the difficulties are at once removed. The most remarkable peculiarity of the book, which distinguishes it from all the other writings even of the apostolic authors, is seen to have a perfectly natural basis; and in the very fitness of this explanation to make all things plain, is the first evidence of its truth. Adopting it as the truth, we say, with confidence, that the additional force which the author, speaking in the person of the apostle, desired to give to his statements through the introduction of himself into the narrative, is not to be found alone in his declaration, "He who saw it bare record," but in that other declaration, "He saw and *believed*." The half-

concealment of his personality, even where he puts it forward with greatest clearness, was not simply because he shrank from notoriety or modestly depreciated himself. But it was because, if he could only show his readers how, through the experience of the things which he was recording for their perusal, the *character* of that disciple, into whose heart these things had entered most thoroughly, had been transformed and elevated into the higher life, it concerned him not at all that they should know his name or who he was, except, indeed, so far as he was the disciple whom Jesus loved. The *growth of his faith* was *everything* to his view, because, *with the power of a living illustration*, it would impress the truth which he had to proclaim upon the hearts of those for whom he wrote. The continuance of the knowledge of himself, on the other hand, was *nothing*, because his every thought was upon the truth and the life; and, while these had come *to* him, they had not come *through* him, but through the Divine Messenger of whom he testified. Why, then, should he not have written as he did? How, indeed we may almost say, could he have written otherwise?

II. In the second place, all who have examined this Gospel with care, have noticed a marked peculiarity in the order of arrangement of the narrative, and in the principles of selection which, apparently, determined the author in his choice of what should be inserted. The explanation of this peculiarity is, doubtless, to be found, primarily and mainly, in the fact that he was writing a life of Jesus, not for its

own sake, but for the purpose of proving thereby that he was the Christ, the Son of God. This being his aim, he shapes all things to the end which he has in view. But the more closely we look into the matter, the more must we observe that there are statements and records in the book, the ground of whose admission cannot be brought within this general explanation. They are not limited to any one place or any section of the Gospel, but are scattered throughout its whole course, appearing, now in some brief passage, and again in a more formal story, but all alike having reference to the apostle's own inward experience. At the very outset of the whole history, for example, what bearing or value, as related to the author's main design, has that simple and impressive record of the apostle's interview with Jesus, when Andrew and himself first passed a few hours in his company,* and, from what they saw of him in that short season, first came to the conviction that he was the Messiah,— what bearing or value as related to the author's main design, we say, has this record, except as it tells of the effect produced upon the apostle's mind, and thus gives to his readers the added force of his own awakened faith? His faith commenced at that hour and under those influences, and therefore it was that, with that hour, he began his history.

* John 1: 35–42. That John is the person alluded to in connection with Andrew in vs. 41, but not mentioned by name, I regard as sufficiently clear. But this is one of the cases referred to in the note at the beginning of this lecture. The supposition that it was John is not essential to the argument, but the evidence in favor of that supposition is strong, and is satisfactory to the ablest writers.

Or, again, how are we to account for the narrative of the miracle at the wedding-feast in Cana?* The placing of this story in so prominent a position in the book, or even its introduction at all, can scarcely fail to arrest the attention of the reader and excite his surprise. Indeed, so peculiar is the scene here described, so different is the character of its miracle from all the others of Jesus' history, so little does it seem to contribute to the great end to which we have alluded, as compared with a multitude of things which might have been inserted in the space it occupies, that here has been a marked point of contention in the controversy about this Gospel: the one party maintaining, with earnestness, that such a passage cannot have been written by an apostolic author; the other plainly recognizing the difficulties which it presents. We do not begin to escape this controversy, as I believe, we do not reach the true ground of the performance of this miracle, until we get beyond any such purpose as the mere withdrawal of those who had been under John the Baptist's teaching from their ascetic views, or the proclamation of the Divine blessing as attending upon the more joyous scenes of life. These things may be discoverable in the story, but they are subordinate and secondary. The principal design was another than these. Jesus had just received into his society, for a few days, by accident as it were, five or six of those persons who were afterwards to be chosen as his apostles. They had been drawn towards him, in their affections and confidence, by what they had seen of his character in this brief

*John 2: 1-11.

period. But, in order to the securing these results as the *foundation of a permanent life*, it was necessary that some miraculous proof of his divine commission should be given them at this early time. Nothing, however, was more remote from the custom of Jesus than the seeking after, or going out of his way to find, opportunities for the display of his power. He always took advantage of the opportunity which offered. His miracles found their place naturally in the order of his life. They manifested themselves just when and where some human want or necessity called for them. Such a need became known, in this case, in the midst of the feast to which they had directed their course. It was a providential happening. It was the first one that presented itself. It was the one, therefore, which he must avail himself of to accomplish the object which, at this moment, was of more importance to him than all others. He availed himself of it, and the result followed. These men — although they separated from him, probably, after a few days more — had been so strengthened in their faith in him by this exhibition of his superhuman power, that they were ready, when the divinely appointed hour arrived, to follow his call to the Apostolic office, though it involved the leaving their occupations and their homes at a moment's notice. "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; *and his disciples believed on him.*" This is the simple statement which the author, speaking in the name of John, makes at the close of the story, and *in this simple statement is the reason of the miracle*, — that

reason which underlies all others, and without which it would never have been performed. But, if this is the true account of the scene, its introduction at just this point of the narrative, following so immediately upon the interview of this Apostle with Jesus to which we have already referred, can scarcely fail to point us to the effect of this miracle *upon his own faith* as the occasion of his recording the scene so carefully. He was himself that one among the little company, the establishing of whose belief on a stronger foundation, at this time and by this event, he realized most fully; and, as the recollection of the scene was vivid in his own mind for this reason, so, for this reason also, he gives it to others, that that which had affected him might affect them likewise.

Or, again, if we look at the end of the history, where the account of the resurrection is presented, what can we say of the life-like story of the visit of this apostle and Peter to the sepulchre, on that first Sunday morning?* The narrative in all its minute points — this is more clear the more we examine them — bears almost irresistible evidence that the scene which it portrays was not a creation of the author's fancy, but that the Apostle was actually a participator in it. But, even here, we do not find in his personal testimony to the great event of Christ's rising from the dead the full and satisfactory account of the insertion of this story. That he had himself been led, by what he saw at that moment, to *believe* that his Master had risen,— that he had, thus, *taken one more step in the progress of his faith*, and by this

* John 20: 3-9.

step was prepared to understand, soon afterward, that, in the resurrection of his Master, the seal had been put upon His divine mission, herein lay the deepest interest of the scene as he recalled it. This is the most natural explanation of the story, as we first ask for the reason of its insertion; and, as we look into it more closely, we cannot doubt that it is the true one, because the *fact* of the Apostle's belief and the *precise measure and limits* of it are so carefully set forth. The story is made, as it were, to bear towards and terminate in the statement of these things.*

Or, again, let us examine the order and progress of the whole history, and the same explanation will suggest itself. We have here two facts to notice. One of them is this frequent breaking out of the apostle's own participation in the events, and the effect of it upon himself. The other is the steady progress, in the main plot and plan of the work, towards its doctrinal end. The latter must be harmonized with the former. The explanation which we give must run its course through the two things, as they are mingled and intertwined throughout the history. If we account for one of them only, we have done but half of our work. But if we try to explain them both together, there is no other way that opens to us so naturally as this which we have suggested. May we not go further still, and say that there is no other way at all? If the apostle, or the author personating him, proposed to himself to prove to his readers that the person whom he had known

* John 20: 8–9.

was the Logos, — if he, also, proposed to prove this by narrating the life and words of this person, — and if he further proposed, in presenting the life for this purpose, *so* to narrate it as, by setting forth how it had gradually wrought out the proof to his own mind, to give it the most suitable form for impressing other minds, — then everything becomes clear. The selection of the events and teachings in such a way as to make the power and character and divinity of Christ appear more fully as the story goes forward; the bringing out of the discourses so much more than the miracles, — just the things which were peculiarly calculated to impress a mind like his; the omission of so many things recorded in the other Gospels, when similar things, occurring at other times, exhibit the same power or attribute *in the due order of impressiveness*, — as, for example, the insertion of the remarkable case of the raising of Lazarus and its location in the narrative, while the other miracles of calling the dead to life are not referred to; the very fundamental division of the book into its two leading parts, carrying the reader, first through the record of what Jesus made known of himself to the unbelieving Jews, and afterwards, through those more tender and richer unfoldings of the truth in his discourses with his chosen friends, — the more outward part of the history, as we may call it, leading towards and preparing for the more inward part; all these peculiarities of the book are seen, at once, to have a more perfect fitness and a fuller explanation, when we see the whole plan, as it were, under the guidance of the apostle's own in-

creasing faith. The other evangelists simply told the story of the things that happened, in their order, for they were recording only what they had seen or been familiar with. This apostle, on the other hand, was giving the narrative of what he had felt, and, therefore, he followed the course of his holy feeling and inner life even to the end. In the very progress of the record, therefore, he presents the *constant deepening* of the impression and the *due order* of the proofs.

III. In the third place, we are led to the same explanation of the Gospel as we notice the repeated emphatic and distinct statements respecting himself and his companions, that *they believed.* We cannot doubt that the apostles did actually believe, in a higher degree, at the crucifixion and the resurrection, than they had done three years before. If anything would seem to be manifest with reference to them, it is that there must have been a steady growth as the time passed on. It was like the child's faith at the outset, as compared with the mature man's faith at the end. Now, the author describes their faith at every point in the progress, by the same word, because it was, in its essential character, the same thing always. But the word must gain a deeper meaning at each new stage, and gather into itself the added force which the newly-witnessed evidences of divine power and truth had given it. It must enlarge in significance just as the history advances. With every repetition it must be more than it was before. The student of this Gospel cannot fail to appreciate this

fact as he follows its course from chapter to chapter.* The disciples *believed*, when they first saw Jesus; they *believed*, as they witnessed his first miracle; they *believed*, on the day following the feeding of the five thousand, when the remarkable words which set forth the mysterious union of Christ with his friends had just been heard; they *believed*, as the last utterance of love, at the supper, faded into the prayer of intercession: they *believed*, as their Master rose from the dead; this disciple, who was the most open to faith among them, *believed*, when he saw the vacant sepulchre; Thomas, who was the most ready to doubt, *believed*, when he beheld the print of the nails and was pointed by Jesus to his wounded side. This doubting one of the company had risen now, at the latest moment, above the highest reach of even John's own confidence at the beginning. But the very fulness of the declaration of *his* faith, at this moment, is a testimony of the growth and greatness which must now have characterized the faith of *all his companions*. The measure of *his* belief as compared with that of *this beloved disciple*,† indeed, may be indicated by the verses which describe the two, and set forth the proofs already mentioned, that were needed to convince them.

In the same connection, our thought may be directed to those passages, in which the author, in the person of this Apostle, says of himself and his

*John 1: 42–45. The language here, "We have found the Messias," is *substantially*, though not precisely, that of the other passages which are referred to. John 2: 11; 6: 69; 16: 30; 20: 8; 20: 29.

† John 20: 8–9 comp. with 20: 24–29.

associates, that, with reference to certain things, they believed only after Jesus had risen from the dead. What is the intimation of these passages, when interpreted in union with the others to which we have referred, unless it be this,— that their faith was a progressive thing, that it had reached out to the attainment of much, and was still reaching out for more? And how do we account for the introduction of this singular phrase again and again, after we have discovered what it indicates, except as we believe that the Apostle draws it forth from his own experience?

I cannot but remark, also, that, while this author never uses the word *faith*, he employs the *verb* which expresses the idea of *believing*, and which, in so many instances, records the fact that one and another actually believed, almost three times as frequently as all the other evangelists together,* and almost as many times as the whole body of authors whose writings follow his own, even to the end of the New Testament. This very peculiarity in his language — as striking as any other that can be discovered — in itself suggests, that it was the activity of faith, growing experience, enlarging apprehension of the things of Christ, which occupied his thoughts,— not a mere dogma, not a mere testimony, but *a life*. And, when we join this suggestion to the preceding ones, we see how naturally his fondness for this *active*

* The verb occurs ninety-eight times in this Gospel; thirty-five times in the other three Gospels; and one hundred and three times in the remaining books of the New Testament, exclusive of the first Epistle of John.

and *living* word may have come from the depths of his own life, and, thus, all the record of believing, which is so constant in his narrative, may have been due to the delightful recollections of his personal progress which seemed to be pictured anew before his mind in the progress of every other believer.

IV. There are also, in the fourth place, brief narratives in this Gospel, and even sentences in the discourses of Jesus as given by it, which, though they have no direct connection with any record of the Apostle's growing faith, yet lose a large portion of their significance apart from it. I can only allude to one or two examples, which the reader of the book can multiply for himself. The little story, thrown into the midst of the crucifixion scene, where Jesus commits his mother to the care of John, is one of these.* This story, certainly, has no relation to the main truth which the author was aiming to present. It has only the slightest connection, if indeed it has any at all, with his personal testimony to the death or the divinity of Christ. It has, we may add, no *manifest* and *immediate* bearing, to the view of the ordinary reader, upon the development of John's religious history. But, as we look more deeply into it, and inquire how it came to be introduced into the narrative; as we notice its contrast with the record of the soldiers' heartless conduct, that precedes it, and its immediate union with the picture of the dying moments of Jesus, which follows it in the succeeding verses, — we may see that it has a point-

* John 19: 25–27.

ing toward that development. The ground of the action, on the part of Jesus, at this time, has been a subject of inquiry and discussion. He leaves his mother, not in the care of her own children or near relatives, but in the charge of this disciple. What account are we to give of so unwonted a thing in human experience? The first reason which suggests itself, and the only one which can lie at the foundation of an explanation, is, that this disciple was a believer, while the members of her family were not. In the time of his separation from them, Jesus wished that the faithful ones should be associated together, and should care for one another. The one among them who needed the most of sympathy and help should not be left to those who were strangers to the faith, even though they might be in the most intimate circle of earthly relationship. But while we admit the full weight which can, by any possibility, be given to this reason, we must remember that these brethren of Jesus were to become believers in a few days after his death. He was to appear to James even within the week following his resurrection,* and this one of his family was to become so earnest and prominent a disciple, as, afterwards, to assume a leadership in the Church. The others, also, were to be the associates of the Apostles and the friendly women, and of Mary herself, at the meeting which

* That the appearance to James, the Lord's brother, was within the first week, appears probable to me from I Cor. 15:7, as compared with the accounts in the Gospels and the First Epistle to the Corinthians, of the appearances of our Lord after his resurrection. The precise time, or even the fact, of a special appearance to James, is not important, however, to the main point urged in the text.

immediately followed the ascension. It would have been but a brief season, had he left his mother with these brethren, before she would have found them bound to her in Christian affection as truly as in family love. Why this singular provision for her, then, unless it had, also, some deeper meaning? It had such a meaning. The hour was a most peculiar one. It was a time when Jesus seems to have risen above all human relationships, and to have fixed his thought only on the higher union with himself. Here stood before him, on the one hand, the woman whom he loved beyond all others,— the one who had seen something of his glory first of all, — the one who was now watching his approaching death with the tenderest feeling, and the most sorrowful outlook for herself upon the future. Here stood, upon the other hand, that one among his disciples who, through the growth of his faith and inner life during the years of their association, had come to be most nearly like himself. It was not strange, surely, in the circumstances of the hour, that, with the sole thought of the bond connecting him so closely to them both, he gave the one of them to the other for their future life. But the gift implied the growth of which we have spoken, and the story of it tells us not only of what was done *in that moment*, but also of the *progress of the months and years before it*. Explain it as thus pointing, though indirectly, to the Apostle's past experience, and the insertion of the story seems like a thankful expression of his faith, as he stands beneath the cross. Endeavor to account for it without this, and, though the record of a touching scene, it

does not so naturally and completely take its place within the plan of the Gospel.

Or, as another illustration of the point which we have now in mind, let us look at one of the discourses of Jesus. There is no more striking expression of the Lord recorded by this author, as it seems to me, than the one which we find in connection with his promise to the disciples, on the last night of his life, that they should meet him again in heaven. "In my Father's house are many mansions," he says; "if it were not so, I would have told you"* This last brief sentence, standing as it does after the assurance which precedes it, has been cited as forceless or meaningless; and it is so, when considered as a mere declaration. It adds nothing to the positive statement. It is only a negative repetition. Had it been uttered by an ordinary man, we should have placed no greater reliance upon his assertion because of it. Had it been uttered even by Jesus, when this disciple and his five associates were journeying in his company toward Cana, three years before, it would have seemed almost like an idle word. But, when we remember all that had passed since then, — when we see that John, even more than the others, had advanced in his faith toward the full comprehension of what Jesus was, — how differently it appears to us! So far from being meaningless now, it gathers within itself all the force which the apostle's confidence in him could give it, — a confidence which had become stronger with the seeing of every miraculous work and the hearing of every miraculous

* John 14: 2.

word. It was, now, the testimony of the love of a friend, whose affection and whose knowledge had been thoroughly tried. It was, thus, far more than any positive announcement of a truth. Such an announcement might be doubted in a moment of weakness or of darkness, but this testimony never. Nay, even, it grew weightier and more full of consolation, the deeper the trial and uncertainty into which the soul might be cast. It said to the soul, in such an hour, you may believe the truth which I open to you — that there is to be a heavenly life and a heavenly meeting — on the best of all evidence, for, if it were not so, I, whose friendship you now know so well, would surely have told you. But, as the words have *no significance apart from the experience*, their presence where they are bears witness that *the experience had been a reality*. And when the author records them among these last words of Jesus to the disciples, he assures us that *the Apostle's inner history*, as well as the history of his Master, was a matter of chief importance in the plan of his work. These incidental statements and expressions, then, so numerous if we could only cite them, point to the same conclusion to which the other suggestions, already presented, had combined to lead us.

V. I add only, in the fifth place, as bearing to the same end, a brief reference to the *inwardness*, if I may so call it, which characterizes the entire thought and style of this Gospel. The history of the book, as it has come down to us through the ages, has strikingly exhibited its two peculiarities. No portion

of the New Testament has been a subject of more earnest theological discussion. It has suggested definitions, and awakened controversy, and divided schools, to so great a degree, that one is almost led, when observing this side of its history alone, to believe it to have been intended only to set forth the formularies of doctrine. But when we enter into the interior life of the Church, and penetrate beneath the warring opinions of hostile parties, we find in all alike the deep conviction, that in this Gospel there is more which enriches the soul, and more which appeals to the believer's inward experience, than in all the rest of the Apostolic writings. The most cultivated Christian heart never exhausts the fulness of what it offers to its life, any more than the most enlightened Christian mind comprehends, to the utmost, the mystery of its great doctrine.

This, surely, is no insignificant fact, which asks not for an explanation It is the leading fact which presses itself upon our notice. It must have a ground and a meaning. The reason that this Gospel has awakened doctrinal inquiry and discussion is because it was written to prove that Jesus was the Logos. Just as truly and just as unquestionably may we say, that it has affected the inner life of all Christians, because it was written as a setting forth of the Apostle's own inner experience. The truth was to be *established* by the narrative of the life of Jesus. The *form* in which that narrative was to be made to move forward to the establishment of the truth, was to be determined by the way in which that life had affected himself. The whole record of events and

words, and everything both great and small, was to be under the direction of this twofold ruling purpose. This was the author's plan, and because it was so, and only for this reason, the history of his Gospel has been, from the beginning, such a twofold history. The helpfulness of this Gospel to all Christian growth in the soul, which has been manifest in all ages as derived from this peculiarity in its character, is itself the strongest proof that it came from the author's own inner life as a gift to the world.

This part of our discussion must be arrested at this point. But enough has been said to establish the assertion made at the beginning. The Fourth Gospel was intended by its author to be a record, not only of the life of Christ and not only of John's personal observation of Christ, but also of John's growth in faith, of his Christian experience, which had come out of that personal observation. He desired that his readers should feel, as they perused his book, that this Apostle was giving them his testimony, not alone by itself, but with the emphasis and impressiveness that would be imparted to it by the intimations of what it had accomplished for his own soul.

We have, thus far, made no attempt to determine whether the author was the Apostle himself, or some other and later person. Our sole object has been to set forth and prove a certain peculiar characteristic of the book, which he wrote. This characteristic, however, having been made clear, the question of the authorship now demands our attention. But it

presents itself only in a single point of view, — asking, Who, and who alone, could have been the writer of a book so peculiarly characterized? At the same time, it naturally suggests to us the mode of inquiry, by means of which we may come to a decision, — namely, by inquiring what are the characteristics of the writer, as made manifest in his writings. Could a man possessed of such characteristics have written such a book, unless he were himself the person who had passed through the inner experience which the book reminds us of, or rests upon?

1. There was in the author's mental character a certain philosophical element. He was not, indeed, a man who patiently investigated the reasons and causes of things, or who deduced from a large collection of facts a rule or principle. The speculations of philosophers strictly so called, even when they were within the sphere of religious inquiry, he perhaps had little sympathy with, though he, apparently, entered into them far enough to comprehend what these men were seeking after, and to know their errors. But, in the fact that his mind was occupied with great truths, and that he rose above the lower objects of thought to the highest and noblest, he possessed this element in no ordinary degree. His intellectual powers were of the intuitive or perceptive, rather than of the reasoning order, yet he was both a learner and a teacher in the school of truth. Now, with such a character and position as this, if he had lived in the second century, he would have been either, as truly as any of the philosophers, a devotee

of some particular system who desired to bring others to accept it, or, at least, an ardent lover of the ideas which filled his mind and elevated his character. Had he been the former, we may hold, with greatest confidence, that he would not have written such a book as he has, in any measure. The prologue,* as has been so often said, would have extended itself over the whole Gospel. Its ideas would have appeared continually in the discourses of Jesus, expressed in the phraseology which so peculiarly belongs to it. The relation of all the following chapters to this introductory passage, and their development out of it, would have been set forth by the author in the most distinct language. All the incidental allusions to little circumstances, which, having no possible connection with the system taught, would only draw away the reader's attention from it, would have been omitted. Jesus would have been represented far more in the light of the master of a school, commending to his disciples the study of his system for its own sake. In his last interview with them, even, we should probably have found him committing to them this system more formally as a parting legacy, and pointing them to it, rather than so exclusively to the presence of the Spirit and a future meeting in the other world, for their consolation and support. But if he were not, thus, the adherent or defender of a particular school, and, therefore, we are unable to say, with confidence, all that we could say if he had been, the existence of this element in his mind, in whatever degree we are compelled to

* John 1: 1–18.

admit it, is, in just that degree, inconsistent with the peculiarity of the Gospel which has been noticed in these pages. If he only loved the truths which had revealed themselves to him, and wished above all things else to make them known to mankind, this element and tendency in his character would have turned him in another direction. He might, indeed, have undertaken to write the life of Jesus, with some of its incidents as well as of its teachings. But, if he had done so, he would have given even of the incidents of *Jesus' outward history* only enough to bind the teachings together; while, as he had not himself had any inner life in connection with those incidents and under the immediate influence of Jesus' presence with him as a teacher, the undercurrent flowing under all his plan and through all his record would, surely, not have been *his own experience*. Still less would he have assumed a personality other than his own, and then have fabricated a religious history for the person whose name he adopted, which was as completely unknown to that person as he was himself. His interest would have been centred upon the truths and the teacher, and the more thoroughly he had accustomed himself to dwell upon these, the less would any such course have even occurred to his mind. There would have been a far easier as well as nobler method for him to choose for the accomplishment of his end, and his every impulse would have been to adopt it. The Christ of John has been claimed to be the counterpart of the Socrates of Plato. Could Plato have traced through all the discourses and history of Socrates such a line of false

experience represented as his own? Would not the tendencies and characteristics of his mind have prevented him? Would they not have made anything else more natural to him and less repulsive?

2. The author had, also, a poetic element. But the peculiarity of his presentation of this inner life of the Apostle is as inconsistent with the idea of a mere poetic fiction, as is the peculiarity of his record of the outward history. Whatever the Gospel may be, it is not a poem. There is no such peculiar symmetry and completeness in its plot, or roundness and fulness in its minor incidents, as would be the first necessity to the poet's thought. And so it is with these indications of what was personal and inward to himself. All is too incidental, too irregular, too imperfect in the beauty of form, to be the work of poetic imagination. Had the author, years after the death of the Apostle, endeavored to picture to himself his character, and how it developed into what it was at the end by the gradual progress of a lifetime, and, then, had he tried to write the history of Jesus with the picture of this growing character continually coloring that history,— and this is what he must have done if we have a poetic fiction of a later day, — then, he must have been more careful of *the form*, and must have made the Apostle's growing character, not indeed more really traceable throughout the story, but *more openly conspicuous*. But the poetic element in the author's mind, which we discover through the examination of his Gospel, is simply that which, coming into the narrative, elevates it

above a mere dry record of facts, and which imparts to it something of the richness of the author's own thought, and of the fulness of his sense of the truth. It is that which belongs to men of the deepest and noblest order of inner life,— *the poetry of such a life*, which, because they possess it, they can impart, in some measure, to the record of their own experience, but never to the experience of another, for the simple reason that it is not their own. It is not developed largely enough in them to make them poets, or to give them the ability to produce a life-like fiction. It leaves them in an entirely different class of men, destitute of the power to assume the personality of some one of another age, in a truthful way, as the poet or novelist may do. If they attempt to assume such a personality at all, it must be in a manner so imperfect and unskilful as at once to betray its falseness, and, therefore, at once to become abhorrent to their own deepest feelings, as well as to be easily detected by every one else. In one word, the book must have been other than it is, and more than it is in this regard, — the author, also, must have been other than he was, and more than he was on this poetic side of his nature,— if either of them belonged to a later age. The Apostle, and the Apostle alone, could have traced, in this peculiar way, the story of his own faith; for he only could have had that richness of sentiment and emotion connected with it, out of which springs all the poetic character that the book possesses.

3. The author, again, was of the contemplative

and introvertive order. But, in this view of his character, also, we say that the Gospel, as it has presented itself to us, is inconsistent with the supposition that the author lived in the second century. The results, which would be naturally expected either from the contemplation or the introversion of such a man, are not sufficiently manifest. Having nothing but the traditions and accounts within the circle of the Synoptical Gospels before him, he would have mused upon them and received their impressions into his mind. As he thought more and more deeply, he would have felt himself impelled to draw out of them the truths which Jesus taught, and perhaps to give these truths, as he understood them, to the world. He might, indeed, have brought himself, by meditation, into some ideas of Jesus beyond those which he found in these early writings, believing that the hints which they contained were suggestive of more than the writers had supposed. The workings of these ideas in his own mind, with their effect upon his character, might have given him greater confidence in them, as well as a deeper sense of their importance to mankind. But had all this been so, what would have been the book which resulted from it? Would it not have contained, not only the formal statements of these ideas, but something of the method by which they had grown out of the Apostolic writings? Would it not, also, have attempted to show, in a formal way, the legitimate and natural influence of these ideas upon the soul of man? Or, if this author's desire had been to set forth this latter point by the presentation of an example in

human life, would not the presentation have been a less incidental one? But the apostle, if he were of this character, might most naturally bring out this other side of Jesus' teachings, which the Synoptical writers had left in the main unnoticed, but which he had meditated upon for so many years. And, while his main design was to give this picture of Jesus as proving him to be the Logos, the very introvertive tendencies of his nature would not only have made it natural for him to do so, but would have almost compelled him to carry through the history the thread of his own Christian experience, precisely as we discover it in this Gospel. He is the person whom all the antecedent probabilities of the case point to as the writer; for the facts which we observe precisely correspond with these elements in his character, while, on the other hand, if we suppose a later writer, there is no such correspondence.

4. If we turn, now, to the moral elements in the author's nature, the love of truth is one of the most conspicuous. Everywhere in the Gospel and in his other writings we find the evidences of this characteristic. The essential and fundamental thing in the right worship and service of God is made by him to be *truth*, and the sphere in which the great enemy of God's kingdom and all his followers live is the opposite of truth. The sense of its beauty is so deeply implanted in his nature, that religion becomes to his thought *the truth*, — the word entering into his phraseology so thoroughly as even to mark his style in distinction from that of the other New Testa-

ment writers. It is needless to dwell upon this point, for it is manifest to every reader who gives even a single thought to what he reads. He who says, Let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth; They that worship him must worship him in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him; Thy word is truth; The only-begotten of the Father, who came into the world, was full of truth; He came to bear witness of the truth; If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth; No lie is of the truth; The devil is a liar and the father of falsehood; Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie is excluded from the heavenly kingdom,— must have regarded truth as the basis of all right character, and must have valued it as his chief treasure.* How could such a man have placed a falsehood at the very beginning of his work as an author, giving to his readers the impression that he was the disciple whom Jesus loved, when in reality he had never seen Jesus at all? But, if he was of a later age, this is not all that we are compelled to suppose. Not only must he have assumed the personality of the apostle, but he must have assumed it in such a way as would involve the most deliberate

* The last of the passages here cited is from the Book of Revelation. If the authorship of that book by the apostle John be not admitted, this passage is, of course, out of place; but its insertion or omission is a matter of little consequence, when the others are so numerous and clear. The other passages are taken from the first Epistle of John as well as the Gospel, — it being generally admitted that these two books were by the same author, whether he was the Apostle John or not. The point which is urged here, however, is sufficiently plain, if we confine ourselves to citations from the Gospel alone.

and painstaking falsification, for his representation of the apostle's inner life and growing faith is precisely that which must have been either the truth or a *labored* imitation of it. It underlies and pervades the whole history, as we have seen, but does not appear as the main end of the writer's effort, or present itself as a well-rounded and complete portrayal of character. The more incidentally, however, it manifests itself, the more difficult must it have been for the author to trace out its course, and the more carefully designed must have been the attempt to deceive his readers. We pass by all the other falsifications which the book, under the supposition of a later date, would contain, — though they cover a large portion of the history of Jesus, as well as that of this disciple, — and limit ourselves to the one only which our line of thought brings to our notice. How could such a man, more full of truth than almost any other, have purposely made such a falsehood *the very framework* of all that he was writing? It has been well said by one of the most eminent of the recent adversaries of this Gospel, in view of other difficulties which meet us on the theory that the author was not the one he professes to be, that we have no example of a forgery of this kind in the apostolic age. We may well add, after observing this peculiar element of inner experience, that we have no example, in any age, of such a forgery from such a man. The truthfulness of his character and the falsehood of his Gospel in this regard are utterly irreconcilable. But the truthfulness of his character shines forth clearly on every page. He must, therefore, have been the apostle himself.

5. The author of this Gospel was characterized by the strongest love to Jesus. This is so evident as to be admitted by all the leading opponents of the Johannean authorship, and cannot be doubted if we are to believe anything of any author because of his writings. But his affection was not only strong. Its chief peculiarity consisted in the fact that it was a deep and absorbing *personal attachment*. He loved, according to the often-quoted remark of Grotius, not so much the Christ, in his official and saving relations to the world, — as Peter loved him, — but Jesus, as an intimate friend of his own. The Gospel professes that this love was developed in the author's soul through his association with Jesus as the most intimate and confidential one among the company of the apostles. The fact of its development in this way is made to appear throughout the narrative, and the process of its development seems to be the underlying personal experience, out of which, at least in one view of it, the whole history springs. Now, that all this is in perfect consistency with the supposition that the apostle John was himself the author, is too plain to be questioned. There is not a difficulty in this regard, which the Gospel presents, if we once accept this view. On the other hand, not only does the representation of the matter, as a whole, appear altogether natural, but the many little and apparently unpremeditated allusions or suggestions, which seem to mark this affection of the author for Jesus as that of a man who had seen him, had talked with him and lived with him, had listened to his teachings and been present at his death, and which distinguish it,

thus, from the love of any one who, living afterwards, could only have been able to commune with him in thought, fall into their places just where we should expect them, and add to the charm and beauty of the book.

But if the author was not the apostle, but a man of a later generation, the difficulties that we meet are insuperable. Such an absorbing personal affection for Jesus would either have made him a mystic and filled his Gospel with the outbreakings of rapt emotion, or it would have so deeply felt the want of some more immediate sight of Jesus than had ever been granted to it as to have betrayed this feeling somewhere, in spite of its utmost efforts at concealment. A writer of a depth of love like this, which pervaded his whole being, could scarcely have transferred himself beyond the boundaries and peculiarities of his own experience, and represented his love as having grown under entirely different circumstances, and into a form which, in this respect, was completely other than his own. The more his peculiar emotion — that of love for a person whom he had never seen, but the conception of whose character he had gained from reading and from meditation only — became the element of his life, the more, even, would he have found himself fettered and hindered in any attempt of this kind. Paul himself, near as he was to the time of Christ's life on earth, acquainted as he was with those who had been in his society, blessed as he was with a special manifestation of him on the way to Damascus, attended as he was, again and again, by visions and revelations, — Paul himself,

we all feel, could not have written a story of such a development of love as we find in this Gospel, as if it were his own. His conceptions could not have overleaped his history so far and so fully, as to have given him power to picture his affection for Jesus with the distinctive character which belongs only to those who live in the bodily presence of a friend. He did not have this feeling towards Jesus; and he could not, had he tried to do so, have deceived the world into the belief that he had. At some unguarded point in the narrative the mask would have been dropped, if only for a moment, and, in the single sentence or paragraph written before it could be assumed again, a thousand eyes would have discovered the falsehood. How much less even than Paul could a writer of another century have done the same thing! The deeper his love for the *unseen* Christ, the more impossible would have been the portrayal of it as a love for the *seen* Christ. The persons on whom a peculiar blessing was pronounced by Jesus, after Thomas had acknowledged him as his Lord and God, because they believe without the evidence which he demanded, know nothing of the peculiar experience that Thomas had. A fundamental element in their believing is the absence of sight, while to his faith sight was essential. What more difficult task, and what one less likely to be undertaken by a Christian of very deep and pervading faith, who lived in Ephesus after the death of John, than that of representing the growth of his own belief as having been due to his sight of Jesus during his earthly life, and to his daily intercourse with him. He would have been

trying to describe the inmost springs and secrets of his interior life as the very opposite of what they were.

But not only may we say, that an author possessed of this peculiar and strong affection for Jesus *could* not have written this Gospel, if he had never seen him as John had seen him, — much more may we say that he *would* not. He must have known that his life of Jesus would produce upon his readers the peculiar impression which it was naturally calculated to produce. They would be led to believe that Jesus said many things — many, even, which had a most important bearing upon the character and the soul — which he did not say. The friend whom he most deeply loved would, thus, be presented in a false light. Not only so, but all his own relations to this friend, and the influences of this friend upon his own mind and heart, would be described in a manner utterly at variance with the facts. If, with this knowledge, he wrote as he did, he *purposely* deceived. He *deliberately falsified* the words of Jesus and his own interior history in connection with him. Such deception and falsification, however, are as contrary to noble friendship as they are to truth. Love to Jesus, like that which he evidently had, would have made him shrink at the very thought of writing such a baseless story of his life. The existence of such love, pervading and controlling his own soul, would have made it, to his feeling, impossible for him to give a false picture of its own peculiar quality and growth.

View the characteristics of this author, then, as we may, they seem to preclude the possibility of his

writing the life of Jesus, with the peculiar element of personal inward growth which we find in this Gospel, unless he was the Apostle whom he professes to be. No conception of such a book would have entered his mind had he lived in the second century. Much less would the preparation of it have been tolerable to his thought.

The same things, we add in a single word, may be urged, and in some respects with even greater force, against the supposition that the Gospel was written at the end of the first century, and was ascribed to the Apostle although he was not the author, or that it was partly his work but was added to and shaped into a harmonious whole by some of his friends or followers. This underlying personal experience is so intimately connected with every portion of the entire history, that it disproves any joint authorship or any working over of a partial or fragmentary narrative into completeness; while, as for the other supposition, in the year one hundred the character and history of the Apostle were too well known in the region of his residence to have allowed the possibility of ascribing to him, with success, not only a life of Jesus which was so largely unreliable in its statements, but also a portrayal of his own inner life which was not founded upon the truth.

But if the Gospel was, indeed, the work of the Apostle John, we have in it an exhibition of *the power of Christianity as it presents itself to men of the most thoughtful and the purest minds*. The author

of this Gospel, as the world is coming to acknowledge more and more, belonged to this class of men, and was even an exalted one among them. He was not a man of weak and effeminate nature. He had, indeed, the devotion of love that belongs to a woman, but the strength of intellect and the profound thought which characterize the higher order of men.

How did the Christian truth commend itself to his acceptance? It did so, because it appealed to his consciousness of the great fact of sin, and offered him help in escaping from its power. It did so, thus, on the ground, and the only ground, on which any religious system can fitly commend itself. No one among the New Testament authors had a more thorough realization of sin as the sphere in which the world was living. It was the darkness which shut out the light. It was the bondage in which all were hopelessly involved. It was the evil principle which wrought out the death of the soul. Until this consciousness of the great fact of sin is awakened, there can be little power in Christianity to bring a man to itself. He has the blindness which declares that it sees, and, therefore, his sin remains immovable, because he will not recognize its existence. But the moment the awakening takes place, the power become a mighty one, and the more honest and thoughtful the soul is, the more firmly does that power lay hold upon it. *To a man like this Apostle*, who comes to the realization of sin, it is the main reality of his life. The need of escape from its defiling influence is the greatest of all needs. The way by which escape can be secured is *the one*

thing to be searched after, and, if possible, to be found.

Christianity commended itself to his acceptance, because of the way which it opened. It was a way in which the Divine Being Himself drew near to his soul, with all the tender sympathies and deep thoughts and elevating affections of a personal friend, and offered him His own guidance and help and teaching. The personal power of soul upon soul, this Apostle knew, as every man of deep and noble nature like him knows,— if, by any means, it can pass from God to man,— is the highest conceivable force to transform and elevate the character; to deliver it from all evil, and fill it with purity and beauty. Having been invited into the society of the man to whom John the Baptist had pointed him, he communed with Him and learned from Him during the whole period of His public ministry; and, at every successive step of his course, he found himself believing in Him more thoroughly, until at last he felt that he *knew*, as with the most perfect knowledge, that in Him this personal power was made *a reality*. The Divine Logos had entered into humanity. God was with his soul. The reason of his confidence was the truths which he had heard, the character which he had seen, the love which had displayed itself, the experience in his own life of the power of this character, and of this love, and of these truths. He placed himself in the light and under the influence of Jesus' life and words; and, opening his soul to receive what they might give him, he waited through the years before the crucifixion; and his opened soul,

he says at the end, had received all that it wanted. The deliverance from sin had come, and the beginning of a growth in holiness and love which promised to be endless. He waited on through the years after the crucifixion, also,— his every thought upon the same life and words of his Master,— and the highest hope of his soul for the immortal future was, that he might become more perfectly like the Master because he should see him as he is.

Now, if the Apostle gives this record, we learn from it that the richest life of the richest soul, perchance, that the world has ever known, came to its earthly perfection through its following of Jesus as the incarnate Son of God, who led it out of the dominion of sin by the power of his own friendly aid. If he was mistaken in his view of Jesus, he, at least, gained a great result from his life with him; and a similar union with Jesus, so far as it is still possible, must, as it would seem, be *a way* of reaching the same end. If, on the other hand, he was not mistaken, it is *the way*, and *the only way;* and the Christian system will manifest itself to every soul, deep and genuine and true as his was, to be *the truth*,— resting upon the consciousness, in the soul, of sin as a reality, and pointing to the incarnation as the personal power of God working upon the soul for its deliverance. But was he mistaken?

This Gospel, in the view of it which we have taken, suggests to us, at this point, another thought. Here is the record of the impressions which the Apostle declares to have been produced upon his mind by what he had heard and seen of Jesus during

his life with him. If they were false or unfounded, Jesus himself must have known them to be so. If, then, they were suffered to remain uncontradicted, the responsibility rests upon Jesus himself. But would Jesus, who was so truthful in his character, and so warm in his friendship for all his disciples, and preëminently for this one of them, have allowed them to continue deceived in regard to himself and his mission? Would he have left this most intimate friend exposed, for his whole lifetime, to such error, when a word from himself would have corrected it? Think of the interview which Jesus had with the disciples on the evening before his death, when all the tenderest emotions of the soul were called forth, — a scene without a counterpart in history, — and if this inner life of the Apostle had not been growing up under the influence of true ideas, if his belief and that of his companions was not the truth, we are forced to hold that the friend who was speaking to them so tenderly was, at the very moment of his apparent friendship, leaving them to a delusion, which they were to extend as widely over the world as they could. Even more than this, he was, at that final hour, intentionally deceiving them in the positive declaration of untruths. Let the man who can persuade himself of such an impossibility, believe it. The world has no virtue in it, and has never seen truth in any soul, if Jesus was untruthful.

We are compelled, I say, to hold that Jesus was a deceiver of his nearest friends, if the impressions of this author, as he gives them, are unfounded; for the only other suppositions possible in the case are

completely untenable. The one is, that Jesus was himself deceived. But the comprehension of the truth and of the human soul which Jesus had, as well as his calm possession of himself, were such that he could not have been carried away by the dreamy vision of a greatness which was far above him. If even in one unguarded moment he indulged such a fancy, he must, as his clearer insight returned to him, have penetrated the self-deception, and seen himself again precisely as he was. If he allowed it to come upon him again and again, or yielded himself up to its power as it came, he must have done so willingly, and, therefore, must have been one who was not deluded only, but who was something more and worse than this. The most recent and most learned of the adversaries of this Gospel who entertain this view respecting Jesus, even in a limited degree, is obliged to admit this, and to confess that he must have, also, consciously assumed what he knew did not belong to him, and thus must have been partially a deceiver. The theory of his being deceived is, thus, inseparable from that of his being also untruthful. The former involves, of necessity, in his case some admixture of the latter, and it falls if the latter falls.

The other supposition is, that, though the apostle records these impressions as those which were made upon him while he was in the society of his Master, they were in fact — so far as they had reference to Jesus' higher work and divine nature — only the fruit of his subsequent musings after Jesus' death. He attributed to his Master, thus, what he came him-

self to believe in only in his own later years. The impossibility of this, we believe, has been already made sufficiently clear by the line of thought which we have followed throughout this discussion. But there is a particular point which we may notice for a moment, and in connection with which we may confidently reject this supposition. In three or four instances in this Gospel, we find the statement, which has already been referred to in another connection, that the author, or the disciples, did not come to the right understanding of certain things until after Jesus rose from the dead. These statements are introduced in the most incidental way, and are among the many indications that the book is not a fraudulent one. But, if the apostle is careful in these cases to declare the fact that, with reference to this or that point, he *did not* comprehend the truth during Jesus' lifetime, does not this very painstaking *in these cases* show that, *in all other cases*, he *did* gain his knowledge or belief *within that period?* In no more emphatic way, as it would seem, could he have proved that he *did not "muse himself"* into the ideas which fill his Gospel, or change his conception of his Master with some subsequent change in his own thoughts or sentiments. It is not too much to say, that these little sentences, so singular as they are, and occurring in the narrative, as they do, with so much simplicity and naturalness, prove beyond any reasonable doubt that John did not attribute to Jesus any ideas or words, except those which were actually found in the discourses that Jesus had himself uttered and John had himself heard. We are reduced, then, to the

alternative that Jesus was a deceiver, which contradicts every characteristic of his nature exhibited in the New Testament, and cannot be true, or that the views which this apostle had of him and of the truth which he taught were the right views, — and, therefore, as we have already seen, that the way in which the apostle's life grew toward perfection must be the only way in which any man can obtain the same. The argument which is, thus, derived from the record of this author's inner life *for the truth of Christianity* is a powerful one. It is one which rises, as it were, *from the deeper recesses of the gospel history*, and is, for this very reason, of the greater force.

The Gospel which this apostle has given us, then, is not only his biography of his Master; in the light in which we have viewed it at this time, it is, also, his defence of the truth. As men, in the region where he lived, had already begun to be involved in the long discussion of the ages respecting God and the way in which he reveals himself to the world, their reasonings had, doubtless, placed many of them in sharp antagonism to the Christian ideas. Some of them, we may believe, had become cavilers and sceptics who rested in their philosophy, and conceived of nothing higher or better than their own thoughts. As he looked out from the quiet sphere of his labors, and saw the dangers which were thus threatening the faith which he preached; as he thought how rapidly these dangers might increase, and realized how, through the charm of philosophical investigation and disputation, they might in a pecu-

liar degree affect men of cultivated minds; and, especially, as he felt that, with the near ending of his own life, the last of the original witnesses would have passed away from earth, and the church would be left without the power of appealing to apostolic authority still present with it,—we may suppose that he felt impelled to leave behind him some presentation of the Christian truth, which should, if possible, avert these dangers. The most powerful presentation, however, for this end as well as every other, he felt, would be *the story of Jesus' life*. With the delightful recollections of his early experience, therefore, he wrote the wonderful book which has been the subject of our thought at this time. How strange a thing, those doubters and disbelievers of his own era may have said to one another, as they first chanced to read its pages, — how strange a thing to be thrown into the midst of our learned controversies, and to defend the Christian doctrine against our weighty objections! It may easily have seemed to them like the fond and foolish meditations of an old man who sees an unreal beauty in his childhood, or remembers some teacher of his youthful days as the fountain of truth. What was this against philosophy? But the simple story, which he told, outlived their speculations and their reasonings, and, when they had long been forgotten, it still retained the freshness and fulness of its power. It did so, because it found its way behind and beneath all controversy, — not arguing with the doubter, but drawing his thoughts to the life which had revealed the truths, and leaving him in the contemplation of the effect of those truths as they accomplished their work in a human soul.

The story stands, to-day, as it has always stood — only that the doubters and sceptics now so realize its divine power, if it is once accepted as coming from an immediate disciple of Jesus, that they try to throw doubt upon its truthfulness, and to postpone its authorship to a later generation. By the artlessness of its record, which is beyond the skill of any forger's art, and by the half-concealed, yet ever-revealed, tracing of its author's Christian faith and feeling, which could only be the work of that one within whose heart these had found their abiding place, it answers their questionings. And when the sceptics of to-day, with all their objections and their philosophy, shall have passed out of the world's reverence as completely as those of the early ages have already passed, it will still give to the thoughtful believer his surest confidence for himself, and his strongest defense against his adversaries, in the inner life of John springing out of his communion with the life of his Master.

VII.

THE TESTIMONY OF THE APOSTLES.

BY ANDREW P. PEABODY.

RENAN'S Life of Jesus, which before the Franco-Prussian war had reached in the original its thirteenth edition, besides not a few in its English dress, is now the gospel of the doubting and unbelieving on both sides of the Atlantic, and will remain so till some one bolder or more subtle than he shall displace him, as he displaced Strauss. His book is a charming one in its delineations of everybody and everything but Christ. In his chapter on the original disciples, he gives a very vivid sketch of their respective individualities; and both in his Life of Jesus and in his work on the Apostles, he acknowledges the authenticity of the accounts we have of them, the miraculous narratives alone excepted. There is in the Introduction to his Life of Jesus, one very extraordinary testimony to the truth of the evangelic history, which I cannot forbear quoting.

"I have traversed in every direction the district where the scenes of the Gospel are laid. I have visited Jerusalem, Hebron, and Samaria. Almost no site named in the story of Jesus has escaped me. All this narrative, which at a distance seems to float

in the clouds of an unreal world, thus assumed a body, a substantial existence, which astonished me. The striking coincidence of texts and places, the wonderful harmony of the ideal of the Gospels with the country which served as its frame, was for me a revelation. I had before my eyes a fifth Gospel, and thenceforth, through the stories of Matthew and Mark, instead of an abstract being who one might say had never existed, I saw in life and movement a human form that challenged admiration."

In fine, Renan treats the entire New-Testament history as an unquestionable record of actual historical personages and events, except where the supernatural element crops out in the narrative; thus far, at least, showing himself both a clear-sighted and an honest critic. In point of fact, the historical books of the New Testament have at once so many external proofs and internal tokens of their authenticity, as to leave no question concerning the substantial truth of their narrative of ordinary events, however we may dispose of the abnormal incidents they record.

Resting, then, on the admitted authenticity of this narrative, I propose to draw from the apostles who bear in it so prominent a part, such testimony as they offer in behalf of their Lord and Master.

In the first place, there is not the slightest doubt that of eleven of these apostles, most or all incurred hardships, losses, perils, persecutions, and sufferings of the severest character, in attestation of their belief in the Divine mission and authority of Jesus; that several of them, as itinerant preachers, devoted themselves for the residue of their lives to the promulga-

tion of this belief, their zeal carrying them into distant lands, and enabling them to overcome natural, social, and national barriers, insurmountable except to the most ardent and self-forgetting enthusiasm; and that several of them, in the same cause, encountered and bravely endured beheading, crucifixion, and other agonizing and ignominious forms of death. These things attest, at least, the sincerity and the intensity of their belief. Sacrifice and martyrdom always prove as much as this. But they do not prove the truth of a belief, — if they did, there would be no end to the shams, contradictions, and absurdities, which, as sealed by the blood of their believers, we should be compelled to recognize as true.

There is, however, this peculiarity which distinguishes the apostles from all other martyrs, even from other early Christian martyrs. The declarations which they maintained at the peril and cost of their lives were not dogmatic articles of faith, but statements of alleged facts, of which they professed to have been eye and ear witnesses. Foremost among these facts was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. That they believed themselves witnesses of the reality of his death and of his reappearance among the living, there cannot be the slightest doubt. This Renan admits. He maintains that Jesus really died; that the apostles caught eagerly at the first rumor of his resurrection, which grew from the stealing of his body (it is hard to say by whom, but more probably by Joseph of Arimathea than by any one else), and from Mary Magdalene's mistaking the gardener for him in the dim dawn and through the mist

of her tears; that they so firmly believed this story as to imagine that they saw him repeatedly, by day as well as by night, at Jerusalem and in Galilee, the whole eleven of them at a time; and that this hallucination lasted many days, and, on one occasion, extended to the more than five hundred brethren mentioned by St. Paul. He says emphatically that had the apostles possessed less than the strongest assurance of their Master's resurrection, they could not by any possibility have been the earnest propagandists and heroic sufferers that they undoubtedly were. We thank him for this admission; and indeed no champion of the Christian faith can ask for a firmer basis for his superstructure of argument and evidence than the concessions made all along by this pre-eminently fair and frank, yet for all this only the more captivating and dangerous, Coryphæus of the anti-Christian host.

But the undoubting belief of professed eye and ear witnesses is not in itself sufficient to inspire confidence in their story. If these men were fools or fanatics, their testimony, though blood-sealed, is of no value. The question for us then is, whether they were persons of sufficiently acute perceptions, clear mind, and sound judgment, to be relied on.

To answer this question, let us look first at their writings. Five of them, Matthew, John, James, Peter, and Jude, are among the reputed authors of the New Testament. As to these writers, we have as good reason for believing in the genuineness of Matthew's and John's Gospels, of John's First Epistle, and of Peter's First Epistle, as we have for

believing in the genuineness of Virgil's Georgics, or of Cicero, *de Officiis*. We find them, from the earliest mention made of them, named and quoted as written by their now reputed authors, without any record or intimation of a doubt or question as to their authorship.

I am aware, indeed, that rationalistic criticism does not admit that the Gospels came into being as other books do. The development theory is applied to them, as to the whole realm of living nature. Their genesis is like Topsy's, in Mrs. Stowe's tale, — "I 'spect I grow'd, don't think nobody never made me." But Renan admits that memoranda of our Saviour's discourses written out by Matthew were the nucleus of the Gospel which bears his name. He thinks, too, that the narrative portions of John's Gospel, which he regards as singularly truthlike and accurate, were derived from that Apostle, and that the whole book was written by his immediate disciples.

Here let me offer some considerations with special reference to the authorship of the fourth Gospel. As I have said, the testimony of antiquity that it was written by John, is unanimous and full. As to his having written the Apocalypse, that testimony is less clear and conclusive. Yet the critics of the Tübingen school maintain that this last book was undoubtedly written by the Apostle John. But it is very certain that the same man wrote the Gospel of John (so-called), the first Epistle bearing his name, and the Apocalypse; for there are several very striking characteristic conceptions and figures, which are both peculiar and common to these three writings, or

to the Gospel and the Apocalypse. For instance, the term *Logos* (the Word) is applied to Jesus in all three of them, and nowhere else; and again, Jesus is introduced in the Gospel under the figure of a *lamb;* the same figure reappears in the Apocalypse, in almost every vision of the glorified Redeemer, and he is called by this name nowhere else. These are but two instances, to which several others might be added, of peculiarities common to the Gospel and the Apocalypse, and rendering it very certain, that if the Tübingen critics do not err in ascribing the latter to John, he must have written the former.

Yet another consideration strikes me very forcibly in favor of the authorship of the fourth Gospel by John. True or false, this is the most remarkable book ever written, and has had more power over the human mind and heart than any other, both in determining belief, and in awakening tender, profound, and fervent devotion. The sublimest narrative ever written is that of the raising of Lazarus. The words put into the mouth of Jesus in that scene, "I am the resurrection and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whoso liveth, and believeth in me, shall never die," are the grandest utterance ever heard on earth, and must and will be rehearsed in hope and triumph, by the graveside, till the last of the dying shall have put on immortality. The recorded communings and intercessions of the night of the betrayal surpass in every element of pathos all human literature beside, and there at this and at every moment, all the world over, thousands upon thousands of the weary and

grief-stricken, who, oft as they read these blessed words, feel pillowed on the bosom of Infinite Love.

Now, there are but two hypotheses possible. One is, that we have the faithful narrative of what was said and done by the Truth and Life incarnate, transmitted to us by the hand of one who saw and heard what he wrote. If this be so, while it makes no manner of difference which of the apostles wrote the book, no one would venture to doubt its having been written by John. The other supposition is, that the author of this Gospel, by his own genius, without a copy, shaped and filled out in those transcendently glorious and beautiful proportions and tints the figure of Jesus Christ, and from his own fertile brain spun those discourses into whose depth none can enter without seeming to listen to the very voice of God. If this be true, then the author of that book deserves the place in human gratitude, reverence, nay, adoration, which the Christian Church has assigned to Jesus. He towers up above all other writers, all other men of his age; nay more, as the greatest mind, the greatest soul of his race. The book is, indeed, superhuman, if he whom it portrays was not so. How then could the name of such a writer have been lost, and his fame transferred to another? It was a name too great to perish, a fame too exalted not to have its enduring record. We are then compelled to accept as our only alternative, our first supposition, — the belief resting on unbroken tradition from the earliest times, that this book, great and glorious as it is, was written by an illiterate Galilean fisherman, and that it owes its superiority to all other books, not to any

surpassing ability of the author, but to the Divine life in human form, as to which he only related what had been uttered in his presence, or done under his personal knowledge.

As for the Epistle bearing the name of James, we have evidence that it was generally received as genuine, and was from a very early period read in the churches. As of the two apostles bearing that name, the brother of John died early, this letter must be ascribed to James, the son of Alphæus. We have about the same kind and nearly the same degree of evidence, for the genuineness of the epistle called that of Jude, or Judas, — evidence which would be deemed amply sufficient for any book outside of the sacred canon. The epistles of James and Jude have also characteristics of style and sentiment which ally them to the undoubtedly genuine epistles of John and Peter, and show that they belong to the earliest time and the apostolic school, and not to the next succeeding Christian age, whose few extant writings are of quite a different type.

We have then, undoubtedly, in our hands the writings of some of those men, who, at the risk of everything earthly, professed to have been eye-witnesses of what Jesus said and did. How do they write? Like intelligent, sober, credible men? Or do they in their writings show themselves so stupid and foolish, or so wild and fanatical, that they could easily have been the dupes of pretension or imposture? This question would seem to be answered by the regard which has been paid to their writings in every subsequent age by the foremost men in point

of intelligence, good sense, and culture. These writers have generally been supposed, in Christendom, to have been specially enlightened and inspired by God. Whether this be so or not, it is aside from our present purpose to inquire; but the fact that such an opinion concerning them has been held by a large proportion of the first minds of our race is a sufficient proof that their writings are at least free from the tokens of weakness, folly, or infatuation.

This view of their character is certainly confirmed on examination. The books present all the marks of truth, when tried by the usual tests. The Gospels of Matthew and John contain a great many names, dates, local and historical references; it was a period of very frequent change in the political relations of Palestine, — a period as to which later writers would inevitably have committed gross anachronisms; yet we find in these books only the closest accordance, in geography, chronology, and history, with all the authorities of the time, especially with the minute and circumstantial history of Josephus. Then, too, we have between the Epistles and the Gospels, just the kind of coincidences which we should expect to trace in genuine works. Thus we find in the Epistles not any formal statement of facts, or set rehearsal of the words of Jesus; but we detect in them unmistakable tokens of firm belief in the contents of the Gospels, and what is more, of precisely the condition of mind and character which these contents were adapted to produce. The coincidences between the Gospels and the Epistles are closely analogous to those which we should expect to find between the

domestic or friendly letters of statesmen or generals concerned in either war of our independence and authentic histories of the same war.

Then, again, there are no books in the world that show greater serenity and clearness of mind than these manifest. Their style is simple, artless, free from exaggeration, hyperbole, apostrophe, declamation, ambitious rhetoric, outbursts of impetuous feeling. Matthew and John, in describing the marvellous life and works of Jesus Christ, write as quietly and dispassionately as if they were narrating ordinary events. They show no fear that they shall not be believed. They use no forms of strong asseveration. In fine, they write as if they had become so accustomed to experiences on a higher plane than that of common humanity, as to be unconscious of their position, — just as natives of Switzerland might talk and write calmly and unexcitedly about glaciers and avalanches, and scenes of which the mere thought thrills us with profound emotion.

The Epistle of James is a very remarkable composition. Had it come down to us, with such slight verbal changes as might have been necessary, as a treatise of Plutarch, or Epictetus, or Marcus Antoninus, it would now be regarded as the finest ethical monument of antiquity, and would hold an unrivalled place as a school and college classic. For common sense, shrewd observation of men and things, deep insight, and practical wisdom of the highest order, it may resign all vantage-ground on the score of any sacred associations, and still retain its prestige unimpaired; while it is no less remarkable for the sharp

edge and keen point and brilliant sheen of many of its single maxims and apophthegms.

I have said enough about these writings for my present argument, — enough to show you that at least those of the apostles whom we know as authors were not feeble, silly, credulous men, who could have been easily deceived by an impostor, or drawn by a self-deluded pretender into the vortex of his fanaticism; but that they were clear-headed, sober-minded, intelligent, and in every way competent witnesses of the events which some of them record as from their own personal knowledge, and the others recognize as undoubted facts.

Let us now take note of the professions of the apostles, so far as they are specified in the New Testament. Six of them, perhaps more, were fishermen on the little lake of Galilee, — not sailors in any large sense of the word (for they were probably never out of sight of land, or in their boats for more than a day at a time), so that there was nothing in their simple, prosaic life to nurture the imaginative element, or to cherish credulity and superstition, but much that was adapted to educate their perceptive faculties, their powers of observation, and their plain, practical common-sense. Hardy, straightforward, honest men, jostled and jostling on the rough paths of daily life, the weaker sinews of character broken down, the hardier developed by incessant toil, they would have been firm adherents to one who could give them unmistakable credentials of his claims, but not such persons as could be enlisted in

the cause of a fanatic, or become the easy dupes of a plausible deceiver. We have in the first chapter of John's Gospel, in a series of conversations whose life-likeness Renan (in an Appendix to his last edition) adduces as a token of their authenticity, a very vivid picture of what these men were before they became the disciples of Jesus; and the picture is that of self-respecting, intelligent, thoughtful men, — such men as the Hebrew theology and the institutions of Moses were adapted to produce among the laboring classes, but such as were developed under no other type of ancient civilization, nor have yet been formed, except in comparatively small numbers, under the half-Pagan auspices of what I fear we miscall Christian civilization.

Of these fishermen, one indeed, Peter, appears to have been ardent and impulsive in his nature. But it is equally manifest that he was testy, petulant, captious, easily offended, and ready sometimes even to find fault with his Master. Such a man as he would have been disgusted with sham and pretension. Had there been aught in the works, words, or daily life of Jesus that was not genuine, honest, pure, noble, he was the very man to take umbrage at it, and to transmute his allegiance into implacable enmity. But his attachment flickers only for a few moments under the natural reaction from a foolhardy courage; a single look from his Master drowns his denial in a passion of tears; and thenceforward none is more prompt and earnest than he to bear testimony, at whatever cost and risk, to the power and love of God as incarnate in Jesus Christ.

Another of the twelve, Matthew, was a tax-gatherer in the service of the Roman government, probably a collector of the imposts on the brisk, though petty inland traffic on the Lake of Galilee, — gathering tribute from a people that scorned to pay it, and sought every possible subterfuge to evade it. His office could have been borne only by one who was all eye and ear. He was a detective by the necessity of his profession, — the last man to be duped either by fanaticism or imposture. He, too, had more to lose than the fishermen. The hands of all the fiscal agents of Rome, great and small, had viscous palms; and we have intimation of his substantial worldly estate in his making a great feast for the Saviour, — an occasion important enough for the Pharisees to know who the guests were, and to carp at them as below the standard of Jewish gentility and purism. His testimony, then, has a peculiar value, both on the ground of his profession, and on account of the heavy sacrifice which his discipleship made inevitably necessary. As for his Gospel, its entire character accords closely with what we know of him. There is something journal-like in its narrative portions, as if it were written by a man of business. It contains more about the Saviour's sayings and doings at Capernaum — Matthew's post of duty — than either of the other Gospels. Moreover, when he speaks of his own house, he calls it *the* house, as a man generally does when he has a place of business separate from his home. The uniform tradition of the early church represents his sacrifice for the cause of Christ as life-long, his service as a missionary of the cross having

been first, for fifteen years, in Judea, and afterward in remote regions of the East, and perhaps of the South; for there is some reason to believe that his Christian enterprise carried him as far as Ethiopia.

Another of the sacred college was Simon, the *Canaanite*, as he is called by Matthew and Mark, *Zelotes* (or the Zealot), as Luke styles him,— the former being the Syro-Chaldaic, the latter the Greek designation of a sect of Jewish fanatics, who pushed their loyalty to the Mosaic ritual and economy to absolute frenzy, regarded the Roman power with the intensest hatred, deemed murder and even stealthy assassination justifiable in defence of the national integrity and faith, and were the foremost agents in producing the condition of things which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of the Hebrew people,— enormities opposed to the ordinary and else invariable Roman policy, but forced upon Titus by the unparalleled obstinacy of these very ultraists of whom we so strangely find one among the followers of Jesus Christ. The Zealots were literal interpreters of the prophecies that seemed to promise extended temporal dominion to the Messiah, and were in constant expectation of his advent. We know nothing very definite about this man's subsequent life; but the tradition is, that he was an indefatigable propagandist of the new faith, and that he finally suffered death on the cross.

That a man of this sort should have been among the apostles indicates, as it seems to me, the reality of the coincidence, claimed by the Evangelists, be-

tween the Messiah of the prophets and Jesus of Nazareth. This man was one of those who were all the time watching the Eastern sky for the dawn of the Messianic day, and that a day, as they imagined, of vengeance and of victory. There was not a prophetic sign with which he was not familiar; but only a convergence of these signs too patent and too full to admit of doubt, could have made a Zealot acknowledge a Messiah in every feature so utterly unlike the mailed and harnessed chieftain of his day-dreams.

This is a point which seems to me deserving of more than a passing notice. The evangelists relate numerous circumstances of birthplace, birth, parentage, condition, and experience, in which prophecy concerning the Messiah was said to be fulfilled in Jesus. Rationalistic critics represent these coincidences as in part factitious, and in part fictitious. They allege that Jesus did some things, in order to simulate the Messiah of the prophets; and that, as to the greater number of those particulars in which he could have had no agency, as about his birth in Bethlehem and his descent from David, the evangelists coined facts in accordance with predictions. It might seem sufficient to say that, as the coiners of these coincidences risked their lives by coining them, they must, before undertaking thus to deceive the world, have accomplished the more difficult task of deceiving themselves. But here we have a specially strong case. A man pledged at once to the most literal interpretation of prophecy and to a line of conduct utterly opposed to the spirit and character of Jesus

is so impressed with the Messianic tokens that meet in Jesus, as to throw aside his old sectarian convictions, to renounce his former self, to become a new man, and to adhere in life and death to a Teacher and Leader with whom at the outset he could have had nothing in common except reverence for the Word of God in the Hebrew Scriptures.

We come next to the case of Thomas. He was evidently sceptical by nature,—I would even say, by the grace and gift of God, who evidently made use of this trait in his mental character for the strengthening of his own faith, and of that of multitudes who should come after him. The other ten have seen the risen Lord, and have no doubt of his identity. He very naturally thinks it more probable that they have been deceived by some family likeness or casual resemblance in another person than that the Crucified is really alive. He demands to examine the wound-marks, to trace the prints of the nails, the incision made by the spear. He was in the right. His was an honest and reasonable doubt, and we are thankful for it. His name should never be spoken with less than the highest honor, and had he been the type of a larger proportion of those ministers of religion who have been successors of the apostles, there would be much less of infidelity than there now is. Credulity generates unbelief; and infidelity has no weapons of its own forging that have half the efficacy of those which it picks up among the crazy outworks, built by a faith both blind and timid, around the impregnable citadel of everlasting truth.

There are two kinds of scepticism,— that of the heart and that of the intellect. The former is adapted to make unbelievers; the latter, to make Christians. The former will not look at the hands and the side, because it is determined not to be moved morally and spiritually as they would move the honest soul; the latter insists on seeing the wound-marks, because it wants to know the precise truth, and therefore avails itself of whatever evidence God has given. The scepticism of the heart hates the light, and will not come to the light, lest its deeds be reproved. The scepticism of the mind is that which cannot believe without sufficient evidence. It proves all things, and holds fast that which will stand the test. It examines both sides of a question, and adheres to that which imposes the least strain on its belief. Such a mind needs only to have the evidences of Christianity fairly presented, to yield to it entire and cordial faith. Many of the firmest believers, many of the ablest defenders of the truth as it is in Jesus, belong to this class of minds. In this sense, Lardner, Paley, and Butler, whose contributions to the Christian evidences are invaluable, and will be so for generations to come, were pre-eminently sceptics. They would not believe, without examining the hands and the side, trying all the witnesses, testing the objections against Christianity with the opposing arguments, weighing coolly and impartially the evidence, real or pretended, on either side; and the result was a faith in Christ, which sight could hardly have rendered clearer or stronger.

God has made many such minds, and they are

among the noblest and best of his creation. I have known, you probably have, some extreme specimens of this kind among the most loyal and exemplary Christians. Take a case like this, — I paint from life, — an individual as the type of a class. He whom I describe wants for every item of his belief a solid basis of fact, and a superstructure of unanswerable reasoning built upon it; and he will let his faith reach no higher than he can lay this superstructure, as it were, stone upon stone in insoluble cement. He has no relish (and I think him wrong there) for those speculations about spiritual and heavenly things, in which from a mere hint of holy writ, fancy takes her flight in those higher regions of thought, which, I believe, God has purposely left undescribed, that we may have our free range in them. In the house built on Christ as the foundation, he prefers to live in the lower story, where he can test the strength of the floor and the walls. But so firmly has he by careful examination convinced himself of the Saviour's redeeming mission, sacrificial death, miracles, resurrection and ascension, that he speaks of them as he would of sunrise, or the phases of the moon, or any of the well-known phenomena of the outward world, as matters long since placed by him beyond question. He conforms his life to these great spiritual facts, as he does to the laws of nature. And when he comes to die, he passes away, not with any glow of ecstasy, but with the quiet confidence of one who knows just where he is going, and has just as firm a belief in the many mansions in the Father's house as in the several apartments in his own house. This is the

style of faith that grows from the honest scepticism which insists on always having sufficient reasons for its belief. It often has less unction than might seem edifying; but if you want valiant soldiers of the cross for times when unbelief is rampant, boastful, and aggressive, these are the men to bear the shock of arms, and come off more than conquerors.

We care not, then, how many there are of the same order of mind with Thomas. The condition of the Christian evidences is specially adapted to their natures. The infidel has much harder things to believe than the Christian, severer difficulties to encounter, contradictions, inconsistencies and absurdities which only a credulous mind could entertain, — from which a natively sceptical intellect is inevitably drawn into the Christian faith. For, if Christianity be not true, we have to believe in numerous well-known effects without any adequate cause; in extensive conditions of mind and of conviction for which there was no basis whatever; in the growing up of confessedly the most perfect system of morality the world has ever seen, in the brain of an illiterate Galilean peasant, in a degenerate nation and a corrupt age, and not only so, but in the brain of one who was either weak enough to imagine, or wicked enough to feign, himself possessed of supernatural powers; in the simultaneous illusion of the senses of multitudes and bodies of men for many successive days, when it was the interest and the wish of those very men to find that false which they were constrained to recognize as true; in the imposition of pretended or imagined miracles upon a hostile people, so success-

fully that they were compelled to admit their actual occurrence, and (as we have abundant Jewish evidence) imputed them to the aid of Beelzebub, the imagined prince of demons; and in many other things equally incredible and opposed to all recognized laws of belief. The fact is, that not a few of the most noted infidels of modern times have been equally noted for their credulity; and that at the present moment the superstitions hardly less gross than fetichism, which are connected with pseudo-spiritualism, are most rife in the very quarters where the miracles and the resurrection of Jesus are thrown aside as unworthy of credence.

One word more about the eleven, before I pass to the twelfth. These eleven, it must be remembered, were not only witnesses of leading events in the life of Jesus, but were for many months his constant companions, on the road, in the house, on the lake. They knew his whole manner of life, — his modes of intercourse with all sorts and conditions of men, — the degree to which he embodied his precepts of piety, purity, justice, forbearance, and kindness in his daily walk and conversation. They staked their lives on a body of statements, prominent among which was the alleged fact of his faultless and absolutely godlike sanctity and excellence. They must have known whether this was true or not; and that they suffered and died to attest it, proves that they knew it to be true.

I have spoken of eleven only. There remains

Judas, by far the most important of all, for whom the Church has been slow to own her debt of everlasting gratitude to the God who makes the wrath and guilt of man to praise him. Judas had the same opportunities with the other eleven for knowing everything about his Master that could be known. He was employed in a confidential relation, as custodian of the scanty funds of the apostolic family. He was probably from the first a selfish, greedy, deceitful man; our Saviour early and repeatedly intimates his recognition of these traits; and he probably chose him on account of them, that if malice itself could find aught against him, it might have free scope and full swing.

Judas entered into negotiations with the chief priests and their associates for the ruin of his Master, and, mercenary as he was, he would certainly have effected that ruin in the way most profitable to himself. Now it was only as a last resort that the leading Jews wanted to get possession of the body of Jesus. They felt by no means certain that they could persuade Pilate to kill him, and they dared not kill him themselves. They would have immeasurably preferred to destroy his influence, to detect some imposture in his alleged miracles, or to find some weak point in his character, some damning incident in his life. They were so doubtful how they could dispose of their prisoner, that they offered a very low price for him. But they had large means at their command, and would have given a much greater reward for a surer service. Could Judas have gone to those men with evidence of jugglery, pretence, or exagger-

ation in the wonderful works reported to have been wrought by Jesus, or could he have proved a single deed or utterance that would impair the reputation of perfect sanctity which Jesus held among a large portion of the people; in fine, could he have borne the slightest testimony against his Master's character, he might as easily as not have made his thirty pieces of silver three thousand, — he might have named his own price, and if there had not been money enough in hand, they would have taken up contributions in all the synagogues to pay it. But there was absolutely nothing secret which could injure Jesus and his cause by being made known. There was nothing for this bad man to betray except the place in the environs of the crowded city where Jesus was going to pass the night, — it being necessary to arrest him by night, on account of the large number of friendly Galileans who would have resisted any attempt to apprehend him by daylight. For this mean and paltry service he had a commensurately pitiful compensation.

But even he repents of what he has done. The power and beauty of that blessed spirit, the majesty, meekness, and love of that holy countenance come over him, but too late to recall his deed. He seeks, as so many do in all times, in our time, to escape the contamination of ill-gotten gain by casting it into the temple-treasury; and finding no relief, in an agony of remorse and despair he goes and hangs himself, bearing as unequivocal and precious testimony to the truth and purity of his Master in that horrible suicide, as the other apostles bore in their cheerful

sufferings and martyrdom for the love of their ascended Lord.

Judas has been strangely overlooked by the Church; no day is assigned to him in the calendar; no account is taken of his services;—yet we could have better spared a better man. We thank God for the life-record of those of the sacred college who followed closest in the footsteps of their Lord; yet while we have the Master, we might not have missed even James, or Peter, or Nathaniel. But we do need Judas, to learn what aspect the Saviour manifested to a subtle, captious, and treacherous witness, and thus to have the testimony of the vilest avarice, meanness, and malice, alongside with that of God and the holy angels, to the truth of his claims, the guilelessness of his spirit, the purity of his life.

I have thus presented the evidences of our Saviour's Divine mission and character afforded us by those of whom the Evangelist writes, "He ordained twelve, that they should be with him." In transmitting to us their testimony, he has ordained us also, that we should be with him. This is the place to which Jesus calls us and heaven invites us. Be it our place; and may it be our blessedness so to confess him in our earthly lives and before men, that we may be owned of him in heaven, before the angels of God.

VIII.

THE EVIDENCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

BY REV. KINSLEY TWINING, CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

THE subject on which I am to address you is the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. We are, therefore, to occupy, for the time being, a position against which the utmost violence of sceptical assault has been directed.

It has not escaped the sharp eye of rationalism, that while the great miracle of the resurrection remains unshaken, it would be of small account to throw doubt on the others. They cannot be discredited while the principle involved in them all is perfectly upheld by the unimpeachable fact which is to pass under our review. Scepticism has therefore omitted no pains to deprive Christianity of this capital fact in its defence; while believers, with a still deeper sense of its vital importance, have clung to it as the critical fact on which Christianity depends. "If Christ be not risen," says Paul, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain."

It was therefore to be expected, that here, on this ground, the battle of Christianity would be fought. And here it has been fought: first, against the Pharisees, who admitted that God might raise the

dead, but denied that he had so raised Jesus of Nazareth; and next against the Sadducee and the Pagan, who, like the modern school of doubt, opposed the evidence of such an event having occurred with the *a priori* dogma of the incredibility of all miracles, and, especially, of such a miracle as the resurrection.

And it is here, on this ground, that the battle of Christianity against the current infidelity will have to be fought. The resurrection is the great miracle which settles the question for the lesser ones. If we must surrender this fact, nothing remains in Christianity to make it worth a better defence than Judaism or Confucianism deserve. Pressensé once said, "If the resurrection does not continue an essential part of Christianity, it is no longer worth while to speak of the rest." But if it does, and cannot be shaken, revelation and the Christian doctrine of miracles have a complete defence; and we may safely leave the flings at the minor miracles of the Bible, to those who find delight in that kind of petty warfare.

In discussing this question, much depends on the spirit in which it is approached. The moral axioms with which the inquiry is begun, decide where it is to end. The writers on the sceptical side are careful to prepare their readers with elaborate introductions before they admit them to the facts. "To write the history of a religion," says Renan, "it is necessary, first, to have believed it (without this, we could not understand by what it has charmed and satisfied the human conscience); in the second place, to believe it no longer implicitly; for implicit faith

is incompatible with sincere history." * Amazing combination of a faith which has ceased to be anything, with a doubt which is everything!

We protest, in advance, against such pre-judgment of the case. The question of miracles— and pre-eminently the question of the resurrection— is one of evidence. Its elements lie within the scope of observation and of knowledge. There exists what purports to be a body of evidence. We simply insist that this evidence should be heard. We do not object to the appeal to *a priori* belief in studying such a history as that of the resurrection. It is only the most superficial examiner who finds in the record nothing more than bare facts, and requires nothing more to interpret them. We bring to such investigations certain guiding ideas or presuppositions, which, whether they are those entertained by Mr. Hume or by Augustus Neander, are equally metaphysical and theological in their character, and equally important in their bearing on the question. For example, the resurrection of Jesus is the strongest possible assertion of the continuity and permanence of personal existence after death. It is the noblest triumph of spiritual life and power over mere nature, and, as such, comes into fatal collision with the pantheistic presumptions, which have been employed by writers on that side of the question as their chief reliance in the attack on the facts which prove the resurrection to have occurred. But if it can be shown that Jesus rose from the dead, this evidence is not to be ruled out by such *a priori*

* Life of Jesus, introduc. p. 50.

considerations as these authors may have chosen to adopt. The resurrection of Jesus, if proved to be a fact, would be a standard by which to try the pantheistic belief. The pantheistic belief is not to test the fact.

Mr. Hume, in his wonderfully astute examination of the theory of miracles, reaches the conclusion that they are loaded with an original improbability too great for testimony to remove; and around this fatal presumption the German criticism of the last fifty years has revolved. But plausible as it appears in itself, and decisive as it must always be to an atheist, what real force does the argument carry with it to one who believes in a personal Deity? What essential improbability is there that such a being should act miraculously? His divine personality qualifies him to do so. The essence of miraculous power is contained in freedom and in personality; and when we have seen reason to believe that the world is ruled by a Being who can act out his will, what so great absurdity in the belief that he has done it? If there be any absurdity in such a belief, it attaches originally not to the miracle, but to the conception of a free personality and of God as possessing such a nature. The incredibility, if there were any, would lie in theism and not in the miracles which theists have always been so much inclined to believe in. Mr. J. Stuart Mill, with a golden candor, admits that while Hume's argument is conclusive to an atheist, it fails to a theist, — the power to work miracles if he will, being one of the attributes essential to the conception of a personal God.

The criticism which denies the resurrection, enters the field in general on what is virtually atheistic ground. The resurrection is incredible to it, not only because it considers human nature incapable of such an experience, but because it recognizes no divine being who by any possibility could be the author of such an event as a miracle. Surely the facts in the case, if there are any, are entitled to be examined with at least some little chance left for them to tell on the decision.

In discussing this question, we put it on the broad ground of theism as against atheism, and claim for the resurrection just that amount of *a priori* probability or possibility which the existence of a personal God offers in favor of there being such an event as a miracle. This is the ground on which St. Paul placed the question when he argued it before Festus and Agrippa. "Why," he asked, "should it be thought a thing incredible with you that *God* should raise the dead?" (Acts 26 : 8.) To the atheist there is an absolute incredibility in such a thing. But with the belief in God the presumption changes, and the probability that such an event transpired is measured exactly by the strength or weakness of the evidence for the existence of a personal deity.

It is but just to add that the fact itself, could it be independently proved, would be such an assertion of the doctrine of theism against atheism, of personality against impersonality, as could not be refuted in any event, and would carry with it a demonstration of our immortal hope and of the truth of God.

From this review of preliminary questions. we pass

to the evidence on which faith in the resurrection reposes.

This evidence may be collected into three groups. To the first belongs the direct testimony of the Scriptures; to the second, that which can be drawn indirectly from the institutions of the church and from the facts of apostolic history; and to the third, certain corroborative evidence drawn from the history of Christ's life. We turn first to the direct evidence of Scripture.

Earliest of all is that furnished by prophecy. The light thrown on the subject from this quarter may not be of a kind to bring the surest conviction to the sceptic, and yet it has a force which it is not for the believer to overlook. Not all the evidences of Christianity are required for use against rationalism. Some at least are for the joy and confirmation of believers. There is a value in the biblical types and predictions of the resurrection, to which even a sceptic might not be wholly insensible. But the believer cannot willingly forget that his Saviour, when the resurrection was an accomplished fact, expounded to his then docile disciples the Scriptures concerning it. Both Paul and Peter allude to them, and it is beyond a doubt that this view became an important dogma of the early church, that Jesus both died and rose again "according to the Scriptures." It is not possible in so brief an essay as the present, to examine these prophetic passages. They are well known; and with regard to some of them it may be said that although their allusion to the resurrection could not have been determined before the event, at least not

by an uninspired mind, yet darkling as they were, they had a considerable influence in preparing the way for Christ, and when placed in the reflected rays of the resurrection itself, add a new and increasing light to that which already shone on the subject. The risen Saviour appealed to these predictions, not to establish the fact of his rising (for his own incontestable presence had removed that point from the region of uncertainties), but to explain it, and to show that his death and reappearance fell in with the historic plan of redemption. He was thus able to satisfy the disciples that his death and resurrection were not an unforeseen catastrophe. This is the light which prophecy continues to shed on the subject; not enough to break through the Cimmerian darkness of absolute unbelief, not enough to be visible to an eye dazzled with the splendors of rationalism, but fully enough to startle and command the attention of open minds, and to confirm those who believe.

We meet, next, the direct testimony of the four evangelists.

The efforts that have been made to break down the original value of this evidence are well known. The books themselves have been assailed as late and nameless works, written we cannot say when, and given out by what authors it is impossible to decide. They have been studied in all lights and with every possible spirit, but with the general result, as we may fairly claim, of throwing new light on a subject that had grown too obscure, and thus of making believing scholarship more aware of the strength of its case. Whatever else may have been shaken, it is now be-

lieved that the apostolic origin of the gospels can be maintained as long as the church will keep herself acquainted with the facts which these exhaustive discussions have elicited. The four accounts of the resurrection contained in the Gospels, come, therefore, before us with this high claim to respect,—that they not only represent and contain the tradition current among the apostles, but are themselves that tradition, and that one of these accounts was written wholly by an eye-witness.

This external or *prima facie* argument for the resurrection, on the ground that the four Gospels assert it, is by no means in so ruinous a condition as some of our liberal friends imagine. Neither Strauss nor Renan will venture to deny that we have here the genuine apostolic belief on this subject; and who has yet ventured to show that the facts alluded to by St. Paul in the fifteenth chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, do not refer to several of the identical reappearances of Jesus named by the evangelists? A notable change has passed over rationalistic criticism. Fifty years ago it saw nothing better than worthless rubbish in the four Gospels. Their origin was placed far down in the post-apostolic times and their historical character derided. Criticism is now more respectful, and though it remains denial, it is forced to the reluctant admission that the apostles did believe in the resurrection, and that at a very early day. It is a highly instructive commentary on the results of the controversy to compare Strauss' first edition with his latest "New Life of Jesus." The problem before the sceptical critics of the pres-

ent time, is to show how the "legend" of the resurrection arose under the eyes and ears of the apostles themselves and came to be honestly believed by them. In other words, it is to reconcile the honest belief of the apostles with its wholly fictitious character. Accordingly Baur stops short at the admission that the apostles believed in the resurrection, and refuses to go further and show how they could possibly believe in such an event had it not occurred. He tells us he is investigating the origin of Christianity, and that for this purpose the *fact* of the resurrection is not necessary, — the belief in it is all that is required. Baur deceives himself by a name. The Christianity that requires to be explained is *the Christianity of the belief in the resurrection*, and not that which grew out of this belief. If he has accounted for the derived or secondary Christianity of later times by tracing it to this belief, let him next attack the real problem and explain the original Christianity of all as it came forth in the belief that Jesus rose from the dead. We still think that this belief will prove to be too closely identified with the objective fact to be detached from it. The external or *primâ facie* testimony of the Gospels to the resurrection, such as it is, remains, then, an unimpeached witness in the case.

But the evidence of the Gospels has an internal truthfulness which is much in its favor.

The rationalistic critics of these accounts have not hesitated to apply to them a severe harmonistic method, the unreasonableness of which in the hands of orthodox expositors they were themselves the first to expose.

Some inexplicable difficulties of a minor kind have indeed been found in the comparison of the accounts with each other. It has proved a matter of great uncertainty to arrange the details of the resurrection in a chronological order. It is not easy to figure to our minds the precise movements of the actors in the scene, nor to ascertain how their various meetings with the risen Saviour combine together. There is some obscurity in the appearance and number of the angels and in the words used on several occasions. Luke gives no intimation of the appearance in Galilee; Matthew and Mark are silent about those which took place in Jerusalem. Only John brings out the mediating fact of appearances at different times, both in Galilee and at Jerusalem. The silence and brevity of Mark might lead us into the error of placing the ascension on the same day in which the resurrection occurred. Thus these accounts in comparison exhibit minor variations, but they all set forth in agreement the really important facts. Why should trivial variation disturb us? It is a corroboration of the honesty of the testimony. It demonstrates that it was brought together independently and was collected naturally. Why are there four to tell the story, if one could introduce nothing omitted in the others? What if Matthew and Mark omit the appearances in Jerusalem. They do not deny them; and Luke balances the accounts by omitting those in Galilee, while John again harmonizes them by mentioning those in both localities. What if Mark seems to pass over the forty days of Jesus' continuance with the disciples, and come at once to the ascension?

There is nothing in this compendious silence to contradict the detailed explanations of Luke and John; and moreover there is some reason to suspect that the original ending of Mark has been lost and that the final chapter, as it stands, is only an abridged restatement of its contents. There is variation in the accounts, and some confusion of details and some inexplicable trifles, but nothing to affect the absolute agreement of testimony to the main events. Similar variations occur elsewhere in the New Testament, without impairing its credit. The trilingual inscription over the cross was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Each of the four Gospels purports to give the Greek in which it was written, but no two of these transcriptions agree. Matthew says, "This is Jesus the king of the Jews"; Mark, "The king of the Jews"; Luke, "This is the king of the Jews"; and John, "Jesus of Nazareth the king of the Jews." Four variations of the same note, but one absolute and consentient testimony! There is no more important disagreement in the accounts of the resurrection. "Estimated at their proper value they never assume the importance of irreconcilable contradictions. They are perfectly naturally explained when we remember that only one of the accounts we possess is entirely by the hands of an eye-witness."* The strange agitation and confusion of the disciples on receiving the news from the vacant tomb, is perhaps reflected in the partial disorder of the accounts. And yet amid all, with how grand a consent come forth the great features of the scene! All agree that Jesus

*Pressensé, Life of Christ, p. 496.

rose on the morning of the third day, and indicate the time as the earliest dawn. The exact moment may not have been known, and the slight oscillation that appears between the account of John, who describes it as having occurred "while it was yet dark," and Mark, who placed it at "the rising of the sun," may be due to the fact that no mortal eye beheld the Saviour issue from the tomb, and the exact moment was left to conjecture. The soldiers saw the angel descend in awful brightness, and this has been assumed for the moment of the resurrection. But it may have occurred before. Unseen by mortal eyes, the body which lay within the rock-hewn tomb, watched over by the power of God, resumed its vital force. He who had "power to lay down his life and power to take it again," silently rose from the embrace of Death, and with an unhurried ease, of which the napkin that was bound about his head and the cerements of the grave laid away in their place remained a witness, without convulsive effort, without "noise" or "cry," and with "voice still unheard in the streets," again issued into the world, not far from that same Bethlehem and beneath the same star-lit sky which three and thirty years before beheld the equally silent and unnoticed beginning of his incarnate life.

To listen only to Strauss, we might imagine every detail of one gospel neutralized and lost in the contradiction of the others, and the whole account reduced by successive disagreements to an impalpable ruin. It is then with no little surprise that we find the ancient picture on which the church has delighted

to gaze, so little disturbed by unfriendly criticism, and behold the old elements of it reforming in better order from the facts which survive the pillage of such pens. We still see the disciples utterly dejected in the long hours that preceded the resurrection,— lingering on the old scene, assembled perhaps in the same chamber, whose walls still echoed with the parting words of the Crucified,— words which, had they been understood, might have saved them all that deep despair. We still see the women preparing funeral honors, and bringing the spices which, as has been remarked,* "were at once the proof of their affection and of their unbelief." We see these women first at the sepulchre, unable to comprehend the testimony of the vacant tomb and of the angelic messengers. We see them returning with their new wonder to the disciples, who refused to believe them. We see Peter and John running to the sepulchre, and wondering there over the unmistakable evidences that there had been no haste nor violence in the removal of the sacred body. At last we hear the sacred voice of Jesus himself breaking the oppressive silence, and breaking it in the spirit of his whole life, with the simple and tender accent of a disciple's name. Again we see him with his people in their safe retreat,— with them in Galilee,— with them in Jerusalem,— for forty days, expounding to them the wonderful events that had transpired. For what they needed was not proof that he was dead, and now alive again, — for did they not see him? had they not "held him by the feet and worshipped him"? What they

* Pressensé, Life of Christ, p. 486.

needed was to comprehend these events,— to see their moral import,— to learn how to connect them with prophecy and promise, and with the ancient covenants and the redemption which from of old had been growing up in the world. And then at last we see him in his disciples' open company, and in his own fully recognized person ascending before their eyes into heaven.

This is the history which, in spite of all internal and external criticism, the Gospels continue to relate. We may still require other evidence to support it. But it is something that it comes forth from these books one consistent and consentient account. The rationalistic critics would have us believe that the evangelists, as compared together, have no one story at all; that what is told by one is untold by another, and that every great feature of the scene is lost as soon as the four are brought together. False as these allegations are when applied to the Gospels, they are admirable as unconscious allusions to the hermeneutics of rationalistic criticism. Badly off as Baur conceives the four Gospels to be, he would probably undertake the harmony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John with more hope than that of the rationalistic opinions concerning them. These modern evangelists are a fraternity who sit like Strauss and Paulus back to back, and their opinions, ranging over the whole field of possible variation, seem to have exhausted the final capacities of that great attribute of freedom which was once so much discussed in New England, —"the power to the contrary." Meantime the internal examination of the Gospels, conducted in

any fair spirit, leads to a consistent result. The testimony of the Gospel is not mutilated with destructive self-contradiction, nor impaired by important disagreements. The main facts are harmoniously related, and as far as four such records can do so, they give the color and the authority of actual history to the miracle of the resurrection.

The Scriptures have another witness of great weight to introduce into this testimony, in the Apostle Paul. He comes before us with the advantage of an acknowledged and undoubted authority. The apostolic origin and genuineness of the four Gospels and of the Book of Acts have been vehemently assailed, but it is not too much to say that no respectable author has ventured a doubt that St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Romans, the two to the Corinthians, and that to the Galatians. Those epistles leave us in no doubt what the apostle's own belief was. "If Christ be not risen," he writes in one of them, "then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." But Strauss is not content to know that Paul believed in the resurrection. In his "New Life of Jesus," he demands to see his evidence and to know why he believed it. In common with the critics of the so-called Tübingen school, he will not receive the Book of Acts in evidence at this point, and makes his appeal to the four acknowledged Epistles. Happily, it is easy in this case to be generous. The four Epistles are enough. They give us what light we need as to the character of the evidence possessed by Paul. In the great passage in the First Corinthians, he says (15 : 3) : "He was buried and rose again

according to the Scriptures,—was seen of Cephas,—then of the twelve,— of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep, After that he was seen of James, then of all the apostles, and last of all he was seen of me also."

Strauss raises the somewhat ungracious inquiry on what grounds of evidence did Paul make these assertions, and believes he can show that they are only a cupful from the current traditions. In commenting on the passage, he attacks first the statement with which it ends, and inquires when and how the risen Jesus was seen of Paul. In reply he resorts, with a remarkable facility of "remembering to forget" what he has elsewhere said against the Book of Acts, to the account there given of the conversion of the Apostle. He now finds it for his purpose to treat this account as genuine, and to elicit from it evidence that the appearance of Jesus on the way to Damascus was not real but visionary. He is then ready with the critical inquiry, If this appearance to Paul, on which so much turns, was visionary, why may not all the other appearances have been of the same character?

But who does not see with what a shuffling of evidence this result is brought out? If the Book of the Acts is good for the use Strauss makes of it, it is good for a better use. If the narrative of Paul's conversion can be appealed to in support of the opinion, that Jesus' appearance in the way was visionary, it can be appealed to to show that it was not, and that he appeared also to the other disciples in the flesh. If the Acts is

received in testimony, the case is soon ended. If it is thrown out, then are we all, and Strauss with us, thrown back on the unexplained and unimpeached testimony of Paul to the Corinthians, "last of all he was seen of me also."

Strauss does not impugn the honesty of Paul. He apparently concurs in the maxim which may now be regarded as fixed, that it is "easier to believe Christianity born of a miracle than of a lie." He therefore presses the reasons for suspecting that he mistook visions for revelations. Without the aid of the Acts he makes little progress in such a solution; and with that aid it is easy to refute him.

Paul introduces his testimony to the resurrection as something he had "received." Strauss fastens on this word "received," connects it at once with the current traditions, and asks if there is any reason to believe that he has transmitted to us anything more credible than the unexamined traditions current among the apostles.

Here arises a dilemma. Paul was once a persecutor. He says so himself in one of the unquestioned epistles. During this hostile period the Christian faith was constantly before him, and the facts on which it was founded; but he repudiated them. How shall we account for his conversion without having recourse to the Acts? He refers to the change in the unimpeached epistle to the Galatians, in the striking words, "When it pleased God to reveal his Son in me." At all events, some convincing and overwhelming event occurred which overturned his plans and views, and made it impossible to resist the

new faith. What that event was, and what new evidence it brought into view, Strauss does not show. If this new evidence was not furnished by a thorough and critical revision of the facts possessed by the other apostles, and to which he alludes in the passage before us,—then it must have been contained in some new revelation made to himself, and which was of such a convincing nature as to render further examination of the current traditions unnecessary. The doubter may choose which alternative he pleases. On either hand a mass of solid evidence will confront him.

In introducing his remarks on this subject, Paul says, "for I delivered unto you what I also received." These words may or may not indicate that he transmitted, without examination, the current traditions; but they certainly do indicate that this belief was then current among the apostles. They amount to an absolute proof that Peter and James and all the apostles and above five hundred brethren, excepting those who had died, were ready to offer themselves as eye-witnesses to the reappearance of Jesus after death.

This testimony carries us back nearer to the beginning than would appear at first sight. It is contained in an epistle written about the year of our Lord 57, but refers to matters with which the apostle had been acquainted not less than twenty years. It goes back to his earliest acquaintance with Peter and James at the time of his conversion and, even earlier than that, to the persecution he led against the church on account of this very belief in the resurrection. At that time he beheld, with hostile eyes indeed, the

faith of the church. Nevertheless he beheld it. His fury against it is a witness of the faith in the risen Saviour which at that time glorified Stephen in death, and sustained so many others among whom he "made havoc." At that early period, within a few years of the resurrection and of the ascension, he first emerges into view from the school of Rabbi Gamaliel, and from that day on, and back to that day, he is an original and unimpeached witness to the fact that the apostles and all the church believed in the resurrection of Jesus. On this point Paul is as good a witness as if he had stood by the vacant tomb of Jesus, and in some respects he enjoys a decided advantage over his brethren. For it must be remembered that he studied Christianity first as an enemy, before he preached it as an apostle. At what age he entered the school of Gamaliel we do not know, nor how long he was there before he led the persecution against the church. Evidently he was there for some time. He was foreign born, and would not have been admitted to the confidence and possible membership of the Sanhedrim without a considerable residence and acquaintance at Jerusalem. His zeal as a Pharisee could not have been acquired in a Gentile residence. These considerations point to a somewhat prolonged domicile in Jerusalem and a continued familiarity with the rise of Christianity from the Jewish point of view. When Renan says that "to write the history of a religion it is necessary first to have believed it . . . and in the second place to believe it no longer implicitly,"* he writes the unconscious indorsement of

* Introduction, Life of Jesus.

the apostle Paul as a witness to Jesus. To give testimony in the great controversy of fact between the Jew and the Christian, Paul was exactly this man. When he states the facts, he does so with a full knowledge of the countervailing evidence possessed by the Sanhedrim. On more than one occasion he alluded to the notorious and uncontradicted character of these facts, and spoke as one who had known the court secrets of the temple and was aware that they contained nothing to rebut what the Christian party put in evidence. As the question between the church and its enemies was one of fact, and was placed in that light by the apostle Paul himself, and made to turn on the evidence that Jesus rose from the dead, his previous acquaintance with the Jewish view of the case gives a truly judicial importance to his summation of the evidence contained in the Epistle to the Corinthians.

I pass next to the indirect evidence of Scripture, from which it is my intention only to select a few of the more important portions. I appeal first to the evidence of those Christian institutions which have come down from primitive time,— the church, the Lord's supper, and the Lord's day.

Examine first the standing evidence of the church. There is no reason to doubt that the Christian church was founded at the time indicated in the Book of Acts. With all his unwillingness to admit the fact, I understand Strauss to surrender the point, and leave this chronological landmark essentially undisturbed. We are able then to say, with no respectable contradiction against us, that the Christian church was

founded on the day of Pentecost,—fifty days after the crucifixion, and ten days after the time set for the resurrection.

This was not an unmeaning event. This founded church means something. It is a monument covered with the belief of its members in the great facts of Christian history, and especially that of the resurrection. If we are searching for original evidence of this event, nothing more explicit or more convincing could be desired than such a monument as this, whose very stones are a testimony, and whose foundations were laid while the evening dew and the morning glory of the resurrection were yet fresh on them.

The strain of this argument falls on the question, When was the church founded? and on a point of so much importance something more requires to be said.

In the first place, the Book of the Acts assigns this date to the origin of the church, and on a point of this nature the doubts raised by the Tübingen school are of no account. Give this book any date which a respectable scholarship would fix, and it still remains the earliest record of apostolic history, and on such a question as the time when the church was founded, could not by any possibility be far astray. Tradition, which grows untrusty in details, can be relied on for landmarks; and even if the doubts raised by the Tübingen school against the book were well founded, its testimony to the time when the church was founded would remain an evidence of great weight.

But looking a little beyond the Book of Acts, it is evident that the church was founded somewhere in

the first century ; but it was impossible that it should be organized at any other time than in that brief period which was so full of the wonder and glory of the reappearance and ascension of Jesus. It is admitted on all sides that something took place after the crucifixion, and that this *something* was the origin of the apostles' belief in the resurrection. What this event was, is in question. Strauss denies that it was the reappearance of the Crucified, and this denial makes it necessary for him to explain the origin of the church which was built on that belief. To do this he resorts to the hypothesis of some second thoughts or intermediate reflections, and supposes that the unknown event, whatever it was, passing through this secondary reflective medium, grew into the sincere belief that Jesus was risen from the dead. But all this machinery of second thoughts about the matter, and of intermediate reflections, is against the philosophy of history. The creative force lies in the original event itself, whatever it was, and not in subsequent thoughts about it. The creative moment is when the passion and the power of the event is yet young. And when that moment has slipped away it cannot be recalled. If the event which Strauss is willing to admit did occur, is not adequate to account for the foundation of the church in the heat of its aboriginal moment, he must find some other which is adequate so to account for it. For the date of the event, whatever it was, and of the institution that grew from it, must be essentially the same. Suppose our fathers had fought the war of the revolution without founding a government. Suppose they had concluded a peace

without framing a constitution, and thus allowed those fiery and formative times to pass into the era of peace; is it within the possibilities that they could have done the work then? Great institutions arise in great events. The institutions and the events are young together, and there is absolutely no time in the history of the church when it could have been founded but the creative time of the resurrection and the ascension.

Turn to another episode in the human history of the early church, — the first persecution; and here we find evidence pointing in the same direction. We are able to assign the date of this outbreak independently of the book of Acts, and to fix it not later than the beginning of the year 37. At this time the church has grown numerous. Its members are widely dispersed, and Paul is riding through the land as far north as Damascus, persecuting them with the utmost violence. Here is a state of things which could not have come on in a day. In the first place the very numbers of the church prove that some considerable time must have elapsed since its organization. Its members appear already at Damascus and at Antioch. This extension must have been the work of time, and proportionately to its breadth carries back the age of the church.

But there has also been a great change in the attitude of the Jewish party. When the crucifixion occurred, there was no disposition to pursue the disciples. The Sanhedrim rated them at their human valuation. Jesus himself was the sole object of their procedures, and they were reassured by his

death. The disciples were indeed for a time in alarm, but it was soon found to be a groundless fear, and they reappeared in Jerusalem with no immediate danger of their lives. The Book of Acts shows this to have been true, and other known facts prove it. How otherwise could Peter and John and James have remained at Jerusalem alive? For a time they enjoyed the popular favor. A great company of priests and Pharisees were obedient to the faith; and when the Sanhedrim, aroused by the progress of the church, proceeded to measures of a mild severity against Peter and John, the people were found to be on their side.

But when Paul appeared a few years later, this state of things was changed and the utmost fury of persecution prevailed. The church was scattered abroad, flying in all directions. Such a change required time and events to produce it, and time and events which, when retraced, carry back the date at which the church must have been founded. A close examination of the Acts will show what these events were.

First the Sanhedrim allowed matters to take their course, and attempted nothing more than mild repression. The persecution which arose at last was chiefly the work of the Sadducaic party to whom the resurrection was a peculiarly exasperating fact. The Sadducees were never strong enough with the people to carry them alone, and accordingly we find them taking advantage of some commotion raised by the Hellenistic Zealots, the history of which is obscure, and in combination with the extreme wing of the

Pharisees, raising the storm of persecution. Such a movement of events implies what in modern society would be called a political change, — the loss of power by one party — the inauguration of new lines of policy and the growth of new facts to alarm the people. The church must have been some years on its way before such a persecution could have arisen against it.

Another fact bearing on the same point is the institution of the diaconate. The persecution arose at the death of Stephen, who had just been appointed to the office of deacon. This was a new charge in the church, and arose not from the command of Christ, but from a want which gradually made itself felt in the daily administration. The church must have been already some years on its way, and involved in the exigencies of a growing work, before such a need could be felt. First it had to become numerous, and that to a burdensome degree; then the apostles, who at the outset had the care of everything, had to learn that the work was too great for them, — and when we consider that not less than thirteen persons, including James, bore that name at the time, we can conclude how vast the work must have grown in Jerusalem itself before the plan of the diaconate was suggested. Such a measure, when proposed, would require deliberation, and all these delays are so much age added to the church, when Paul appears, leading against it the persecution which arose early in the year 37.

Such considerations as these ingrained into the history — and the more it is studied the more they

multiply — point unmistakably to the foundation of the church at the time indicated in the Acts, and the raising then of its since unbroken testimony to the resurrection.

Similar in character and importance is the testimony of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. To avoid disputed ground, we still draw our evidence from the acknowledged epistles of Paul. What he says in regard to the origin of this sacrament is familiar and significant. It carries its institution back beyond the crucifixion, and yet shows that its significance could not be complete until after the resurrection. A prophecy when first instituted, it was quickly adopted by the church as a testimony and a memorial. Its continuity, as a chain of testimony, cannot be broken. It is the Christian rite in which we behold united in one moment the crucifixion and the resurrection. It is a positive institution which spans the gulf of time, and carries us back to the upper chamber where Christ gave this memorial to his disciples.

So also the Lord's day is another witness, bringing to us as often as it occurs with unerring precision and unwearied regularity, tidings from the vacant tomb.

Tübingen hears Paul. Let, then, Paul speak; for he tells of the "first day of the week," and shows that was the Christian day,— and what but the resurrection made it this?

Strauss hears John,— not John in the Gospel, but John in the Apocalypse, and John speaks there of the "Lord's day,"— that he was "in the spirit on

the Lord's day." But how could the Apostle John call it the Lord's day unless in one such day Jesus rose?

Strauss would have us believe that at the death of Jesus the disciples fled to Galilee, and there, amid the familiar scenes, peopled with recollections of Jesus, his old form came back, and aided by ecstatic affection formed slowly into the conviction of him as living, and that this belief grew up insensibly on the heights of Nazareth, into the legend of the resurrection; while Renan, calling to his aid rather more of conscious fraud, describes how in that same retreat love and hope, brooding over the past, rose into visions, and wrought out at length by purely psychological processes the miracle of the resurrection. "Divine power of love," he cries. "Sacred moments, in which the passion of a hallucinated woman gives to the world a resurrected God."*

A more truly gossamer web of fiction was never spun. Apostolic history begins in Jerusalem, and not in the sacred retreats of Galilee. Before there had been time for the apostles' minds to cool, we find them at Jerusalem, embodying their faith in the solid matter-of-fact but significant institutions of the church and its sacraments. The date at which these positive institutions, with their testimony to the resurrection, were going on at Jerusalem, is the best of evidence that there was no time for a retreat to Galilee, for the growth of fantastic speculations and unconscious deception, nor for the formation of a visionary faith.

* Life of Jesus, p. 357.

Had the apostolic church issued from Galilee, there would be more color to such an hypothesis. But it was planted at Jerusalem, and at a time when the history of Jesus and the circumstances of his death were fresh in the knowledge of all the city. And Jerusalem with its Pharisees and Sadducees and the dreaded Sanhedrim was a disenchantment of dreamers that would not have been lost on the apostles of a visionary faith. The reappearance of the disciples at this city, and their bold proclamation of the faith there, are, when duly considered in all of their bearings, enough of themselves to overthrow the theory of the mythical origin of the Gospels.

It remains for us to glance at a few significant facts of Christian experience which, without the resurrection to explain them, would be inexplicable and incredible.

One of these is the sudden and remarkable transition of the disciples from deep despair after the burial of Jesus to high and permanent exultation.

There is no reason to suppose that the picture which the Gospels give of the disciples in those dejected days was overdrawn. They were like men "crushed by the great stone rolled to the door of the sepulchre." And yet the church was not born of despair, but of hope. It was a grand burst of enthusiasm that laid its foundations. But what raised those bowed heads? What inspired those dejected minds? A few days pass, and we find this aimless, headless company, without one great original mind among them, without one leader able

to originate a plan of action, or even to comprehend, unaided, the significance of what had already transpired, reappearing in the temple with an unconquerable courage, overflowing with hope and joy, and full of plans for work. Whence came this? Not from the disciples,— for such plans, such comprehension of the significance of events, was not in them. The only original and constructive mind the apostolic church ever had was Paul, and Paul was at this time a persecutor. It was not yet time for talents like his. These first days of the church needed simple and childlike minds to utter only what was given them, and to reflect the sacred impression of the Saviour. Whence, then, this sudden hope and joy and comprehension of redemption through the death of Christ? Whence this sudden starting up of the divine plan of the Gospel, and of an appointed work and order, to those who in losing Jesus had lost the only plan and aim they had ever known? Strike out the resurrection, and who can reply? Read the account as it stands, and who feels a surprise at these features of the case?

Not less remarkable is the sudden fading out, at this time, of the hope in the worldly Messiah. So ineffaceable was this hope that when Jesus was risen, the disciples greeted him with the question, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" But this view, which survived the crucifixion and the resurrection, then died away forever. In its place we find Jesus preached on the day of Pentecost in the character which he has held through all the subsequent history of the church,— of the Saviour of the world

from sin. Faith in his name was no longer a title to nobility in a messianic kingdom, but a way of holiness and a promise of redemption from sin. This sudden and amazing breaking forth of light from minds so blank and dark before, supposes the appearance of some great luminous fact in their experience. This change could not be spontaneous; and, without the resurrection, remains as inexplicable as it is plain with it. Strike out the resurrection, and who can show how Jesus, the Jewish Messiah and temporal prince, as the disciples beheld him previous to the resurrection, came to be preached on Pentecost, in the new and divine character of the world's Redeemer?

I have spoken of the church itself, as a witness to the resurrection. In the continuity of its life and hope and experience in Christ Jesus it furnishes a fact in evidence which is wholly inexplicable and incredible, when torn away from the resurrection and from the ascension gifts of the glorified Redeemer. The risen Saviour is the inner contents of all Christian life, and the essential power and victory of the church. The fact that they exist is a testimony that *He* rose. The church ascends toward heaven with the rising Lord. The church *is*, because Christ *lives*.

We see this in the first appearance of the apostles at Jerusalem, and we see it in every other moment of true Christian life since. The apostles did not come forward at Pentecost with a doctrine, but with a Saviour. They did not act as discoverers of a new and potent philosophy, but as disciples of an ever living Christ.

This original consciousness of life and power in Christ has continued to be the characteristic of the church in all ages. It has bound together the divided sections of its communion; it has given the continuity of its succession amid all the variations of belief and practice. At the end of our reasonings we return to it, not so much as the rock on which to build, as the pillow on which to rest in peace and hope. "We have found the Messiah" was the first testimony which one man ever gave to another that the Son of God was in the world. "We have found the Saviour," is the testimony in which myriads of converted souls continue the testimony to Jesus the risen and ever-living Redeemer.

IX.

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE PERSONAL WORK OF CHRIST IN THE WORLD.

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THE doubts and difficulties of many persons about Christianity may be included in the question, Is it adequate — adequate to fulfil its own proposals to the world?

No such proposals are made elsewhere. Christ was heralded as He that "taketh away the sin of the world"; no other proposes to bear that burden. He declares the object of his mission, "That the world through him might be saved"; no other undertakes that work. And as it appears in his life and teachings, it is a work for man, whose divine benevolence, moral grandeur, and blest benefits human thought had never before approached, and has not yet measured. Christ offers to man complete recovery from evil — from sin, which is spiritual and primitive evil, and from all the others, which are its miserable consequences. He offers to renovate men, to educate them as children of God, and to give them, thus prepared for it, an everlasting and glorious inheritance in the society of all the holy, called the Kingdom of Heaven. These are not special privileges for a few, but a common benefaction for all; not a beneficial provision,

set within the possible reach of men, but an actual work of recovering them to righteousness and blessedness, which Christ began in person, and which he proposes to have finally accomplished in the whole world.

Having now in our view, on the one hand, the world as it is at present, and on the other, the immeasurable good thus proposed to it, all the more reasonable of our doubts and difficulties about it will take form in the solicitous question, Is Christianity adequate to realize its own benevolent designs? And when a work of such blest beneficence, which, apart from Christianity, the world never thought of, and which the world evidently could not do for itself, is proposed, reason requires proportionate powers and means to accomplish it. A most reasonable faith, therefore, need not hesitate at what is supernatural in those powers and means — neither at mystery in well authenticated truth, nor at miracles in well attested facts; neither at the incarnation of the Son of God, nor at the regeneration of the soul of man. On the contrary, in view of the ends proposed by Christianity, a reasonable faith *requires* supernatural power to effect them, and some supernatural acts to warrant the promise of their fulfilment. Had this work alone been announced, without any knowledge of Christ, scepticism itself would naturally demand a divine being to do it,— divine excellence in his character, divine truth in his teachings, and miracles among his acts. And now, when we consider what must be done in the soul and the world, if our great Christian hopes for them shall be realized, instead of objecting

to supernatural power in Christianity, we shall rather inquire whether its supernatural power is sufficient; instead of objecting to supernatural transactions in it, we shall rather be concerned to know whether these are adequate to ensure the completion of its benevolent designs.

We are thus prompted to compare the personal work of Christ in the world with his designs, — that is, to compare what he actually did, with what Christianity must yet do in order to fulfil his proposals.

Admitting the records of his life as given by the evangelists, — as the failure of the utmost attempts of sceptical criticism compels us to do, — neither reducing nor multiplying, as we study his work we are almost surprised that we come, in some directions, so soon to its limits. There is, apparently, a great disproportion between the kind, and the extent, of Christ's personal work, — between his apparently unlimited power, and the very restricted limits of its exercise. Indeed, one of the most wonderful things in the work of Christ, especially considering his designs, is its limitation — that, having entered the world as he did, on such a mission, he left it so soon — that, having said and done what he did, he said and did no more.

We notice the limiting facts: — Christ lived in the world but about thirty-four years; he was engaged in his public work but about three and a half. He confined himself to his own little country; he did nothing in person for any other. He worked miracles to authenticate his divine person and mission; but these proofs were in various ways so limited,

that in his own times many denied or doubted them, and many well-disposed inquirers have been perplexed or doubtful in regard to them. He gave to the world a new revelation of God and the future life; but his teachings were so limited, that on important matters of doctrine and practice his church has always been grievously divided, sincere believers have often been in error, and the most gifted and diligent students have often failed to agree on his meaning. His training of his apostles was so limited, compared with their need of it, that they failed to understand his personal teachings; they all forsook him at his arrest; they were surprised and discouraged by his death, and faithless about his resurrection.

The extraordinary work which Christ did in relieving suffering and promoting the physical welfare of men, was singularly limited. He walked on the sea; he stilled the tempest that imperilled his disciples' boat. This is evidence of a power sufficient to permanently mollify the fury of the elements. Yet storms have been as furious, and the seas as dangerous, since as before. Even his great apostle to the Gentiles was shipwrecked thrice on his missionary journeys, and for a night and a day was floating on the open sea. The infidel with plausibility may say, Human art has done much that is now available for the bodily safety of men, but the omnipotence of their professed Saviour has done nothing. Christ healed many sick people, thousands in all, but in comparison with his healing power, how restricted was its exercise! How many thousands of the sick were not cured! How many thousands did not even

hear of the marvellous Healer! And those who were healed were doubtless sick again. The power which, with a word, cured fever and paralysis, might have banished these diseases forever from the earth, or made permanent provision for their cure. But Christ abolished no disease, gave no panacea; nor can his power now be successfully invoked for such miraculous healing. The infidel with plausibility may say, Human art has done much that is always available for the relief of suffering and cure of disease; but he who is said to have exercised miraculous healing power as the omnipotent Saviour of the world, has done nothing; medicine has done more for health than miracles. Christ raised the dead; in one case in the chamber of death, in another from the bier, in another from incipient corruption in the grave. Yet those who were raised died again. He had power to give life, yet death prevailed while he was in the world, and has since his resurrection as before.

His work appears as limited, viewed in relation to its immediate moral and spiritual effects. "The Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil"; but while thus manifested, though he cast out devils he did not destroy any great iniquity. He was the Prince of Peace, but he did not destroy war. He came as the light of the world, but he left it apparently about as dark as before. He came that the world through him might be saved; in a few years he went away, before the greater part of the world knew he had been here at all, and he left it about as bad as it was before,—as wicked and as wretched.

Why should Christ thus limit his personal work in the world? The question is not too daring. The faith that is most truly Christian, has no fear of reasonable inquiry. The reverence that is most truly Christian, will never serve as a shelter for intellectual timidity. The thorough study of our religion is one of our religious duties, and everything in Christianity is peculiarly provocative of study. This question confronts us early in our inquiries; it is legitimate and practical; it vitally concerns our personal faith, and our labors and hopes for the prevalence of Christianity.

The limitations of Christ's personal work cannot be explained by the excellence of his person, or by the value of his revelation. On the contrary, our question sets out from all that can be reasonably claimed on these points. Doubtless he was the one divine and perfect man,—the Son of God and of Man. He came to save men by drawing their faith, love, and hope to his person. Why, then, should he so restrict his personal intercourse with them? He has made a new revelation of God and the life to come; but, admitting that this is itself sufficient, it requires to be taught, and none can teach it as he who gave it, — "never man spake like this man." Why, then, should he so limit his personal teaching? Doubtless he has immeasurable benefits for man, but why should he so limit his personal labors in dispensing them? We shall not find the explanation in the special gifts bestowed on the apostles, and the special work assigned to them. For no apostle could be what Christ himself was; and besides,

the work of the apostles was subject to similar limitations.

Admitting the value of his religion, its sufficiency for the soul, its diffusion and transforming power, it may still appear to some that the personal presence and work of Christ were greatly needed in the world when he went away. Why did he not remain to lead the conquests of his kingdom in person? Had he remained half a century longer, and visited all the nations in person, we are apt to think he might have left the world substantially Christianized. And at how many times in the history of the church has her great and urgent need appeared to be the personal presence of her Head? And this appears, to some, to be the great need of the church and the world now. Some think the effect of his presence here, eighteen hundred years ago, has been greatly weakened by the lapse of this long time. The world, also, has greatly changed. Hence, there is need, they say, that Christ should manifest himself again, resume his work, and connect his religion with the advanced conditions of modern times. They would not have him come again as he came before, but come as he left. They would not have the earthly life of Christ repeated,— they would not have him endure the cross again,— but they would have him teach his gospel in connection with modern thought; bring his personal life into connection with modern civilization; and do, in the presence of modern science, some mighty works for the revival of faith and the advancement of his religion. Some argue the necessity of such a further personal work of Christ from the condition

of the world; but, of course, the necessity, that he should do something more for the prevalence of his religion, arises from the limitations of what he has done; it implies that he did not do enough, or perhaps that he could not do enough at that time.

But Christ evidently limited his personal work purposely. His supernatural power did not fail. His mighty works did not weaken nor weary it, for his resurrection and ascension are its most signal manifestations. It was adequate to any amount of similar work, but he confined its exercise to fixed limits. His love did not fail. There is no indication that his benevolent interest in man declined in the least. He was not weary of his work. The glories of Heaven did not allure him away. He evinces no disgust with the world, no impatience in toil or suffering, no haste in departure. On the contrary, his sympathies evidently increased with all he did and bore. "Having loved his own which was in the world, he loved them unto the end." His interest for his followers appears most tender, and his concern for the world most intense, at the very last. He evidently confined his benevolent activities to the fixed limits given in the facts of his life.

This limitation of his life-work appears even more remarkable, viewed from the person of Christ, than from the wants of the world. How could such a being, on such a mission, so restrain his love and power? A very acute and original writer* regards it as one of the most remarkable points in the character of Christ, that, possessing such power, he did

* The author of Ecce Homo.

not resort to force to establish his kingdom. And that he should *never* employ it, not even against his most wicked opposers, is indeed wonderful. But above the height of this wonder, we may see, a little farther back in the range, another far higher, and that is, that he restrained his power in works of benevolence. It is difficult for good men to restrain their benevolent activities, even when these cannot be well employed, or have ceased to be useful. How, then, could Christ, with his opportunities, forbid his undiminished love and power to do more for men? The philanthropist or missionary leaves his work reluctantly, even when his strength has failed. How then, could Christ terminate his work as he did, and leave this sinful world so soon? Did he not weep over Jerusalem as he viewed it from Olivet a few days before he died? Did he not foresee the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place? Could not the Prince of Peace keep the peace between the nations, and prevent the horrible carnage which he then foresaw?

But we observe that, as Christ terminated his work without any disgust or impatience, so he did also without any hesitation or regret. He makes the reason evident: He declares that he had finished his work. We have no intimation that his mission included anything more. His charge to the apostles, and through them to the church, assumes that his personal work on earth was done. He promises to return, but he gives no intimation that he would come to resume, at a future time, a work which he then left unfinished. His limitation of his work was

a clear purpose; he defined it, and then fulfilled it; His wisdom set the limits to the exercise of his love and power. A clear perception of this wisdom is necessary to a worthy confidence in Christianity.

In any perfect organism or mechanism, the limits of any part are determined exactly by its connections with the others. This is true of all the work of God; no part comes short, no part overlaps. This is true of the personal work of Christ in the world, and this explains its limitations — it is limited exactly to its connections. We propose to consider now the principal lines of its connections.

I. The supernatural work of Christ was limited, on one side, by its connections with nature.

His miraculous work was not antinatural nor unnatural, but extranatural and supernatural. He did not undertake to revolutionize nature, but rather to deliver it, as he does men, "from the bondage of corruption." He did not make any correction or criticism of nature; he denounced nothing in it, destroyed none of its forces, amended none of its operations. In doing the work of the Redeemer, he does not, in the least, disturb any of the arrangements of the Creator. He honors nature as the perfect work of God, referring to it freely and frequently in all its departments, for illustration of the truths and operations of his own spiritual kingdom.

To represent the miracles of Christ as violations or suspensions of natural law is very incorrect. He says, "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil;" "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be ful-

filled." And this, which is true of the law given by Moses, is equally true of all law established by the Creator in the material and spiritual world, in the bodies and souls of men. Christ destroyed no law, he violated none, he suspended none. Gravitation remained the same, while he walked on the sea. The forces and laws of the body remained the same, when he instantly healed the sick and gave sight to the blind. When I raise my hand, I overcome a material force, but I do not destroy, nor suspend, that force or its law. When I set my clock forward or backward, I introduce a power and perform an act that do not belong to the instrument, but I have not changed the law of its action; to do that, I must reconstruct it. In his miracles of healing, Christ overcame the forces of the body by a power, manifestly divine, which wrought the effect; but he did not displace those forces, nor derange their law; for, when he withdrew his supernatural power, they resumed their operations, just as before. He performed these cures in numerous instances, but, as compared with the amount of disease in the world, then and since, they were very few. Now if, by his supernatural power, he had provided a remedy which should be available and efficacious in every case of disease, he would have defeated the Creator's arrangements. If he had prevented disease altogether, by permanently changing the action of natural forces, he would have so far reformed creation itself; then we should find the divine power of the Redeemer correcting or improving the divine work of the Creator. But the Creator's work neither

requires nor admits correction or improvement. The most dreadful fact in nature is death. But — so far as the great change is dreadful — death entered the world by sin, — death, with all its precursors and concomitants. This is the natural order; and this is right. Indeed it is impossible to conceive any order in which these should not be the consequences of sin; for they are its fruit, growing out of its very nature. To suppose that they did not follow, would be to make sin as good as righteousness, or to identify them. If there be sin, there must be weakness, pain, death; they are inevitable and right. We see, therefore, that Christ could not attempt to change this natural order, nor allow his supernatural power to encroach on it. As well might he weaken the moral law, for this natural order is one of the main supports of that law.

It is evident that the prime and paramount object of the supernatural work of Christ was not the physical welfare of men. God has allowed to men, in nature, all the physical welfare consistent with the facts of sin; and while these facts remain, supernatural power could not rightly be employed to increase it. The prime and paramount object of his mission was to save from sin. Physical welfare is included incidentally in the process, but completely only as one of the results. And the supernatural work of Christ was in strict accordance with his paramount object. So far as miracles for the physical welfare of men were required as means to this end, though supernatural acts, they were not inconsistent with nature; though extraordinary, they were not dis-

orderly; for everything in nature is ordered with reference to the same general end. To this limit, Christ must employ his supernatural power in healing disease, or in other work for the physical good of men, but not further. Beyond this, all such employment of his supernatural power would have been disorganizing and destructive.

We can show that the work of Christ did not *fall short* of this limiting line. It was necessary to his mission as the Saviour, that he should fully authenticate to men his divine power and love. He must prove his authority to forgive sin, and his ability to give eternal life. This could be done only by some acts, alike supernatural, benevolent, and manifest to the senses, — that is, by miracles for the body, for no others would answer all these conditions. And it is evident that Christ's miracles for the body were sufficient for this purpose. They fully manifested his unlimited power, in the control of the forces of nature, and his unlimited love, in his sympathy with all the miseries of men. Divine power and love, two great qualifications of the Saviour of men, were abundantly evinced in his miracles for the body.

It is not difficult to show, also, that Christ did not *go beyond* the limiting line. The obligation to do the greatest amount of good forbade him to go farther than he did in the use of his supernatural power for the physical benefit of men. He, whose word withered the fruitless fig-tree, might have destroyed all bad trees; might have forbidden thorns and thistles to grow any more on the earth. But thorns and thistles were wisely ordered by the Creator to follow

sin, and while sin is in the world, they will always grow in some form; they will be needed, and Christ would not forbid them. He, whose blessing on a few loaves made them sufficient to feed thousands, might have so blessed the earth, that its spontaneous production should always be sure and abundant for all. Thus he might have prevented hunger, the hardships of labor, and the fear of want. But to do this, while sin prevailed in the world, would be to undo the sentence pronounced against sin at first, and that sentence was most wise and merciful, as well as just. The Redeemer must not revoke it nor interfere with it. Possibly Christ might have driven all diseases from the world with his rebuke, as he did the fever from Peter's wife's mother. But had sin been left, this would have been no benefit; indeed, sin, and other miserable consequences of sin, such as violence, and suffering in other forms, would have been all the worse for such relief. Christ might have made the seas everywhere safe, the air salubrious, the land fertile; but, while men were morally unchanged, this would be only ruinous encouragement to sin. All the natural arrangements of the world conform to the facts of sin, and this order is perfectly wise. Nature is right; thorns and thistles, toil, peril, pain, disease, and death, are right. They are all God's ministers of discipline and mercy in a world of sin, and Christ would not interfere with their ministry. They are all necessary as monitors, restraints, or correctives. Even death is indispensable while sin prevails in the world. The early death of wicked men is sometimes the only seasonable

relief of society from their iniquities. If Christ had employed his supernatural power, without any limitation, for the removal of physical evils, the world being still in sin, or had gone beyond the limit which he fixed, even though his objects had apparently been benevolent, and he had been led by his sympathies, he would have misused his power — he would have turned it all to evil, — he would not have been the great Saviour, but a great destroyer.

Christ evinced his divine power and love, two great qualifications of the Saviour of men, by his miracles for their physical good. He evinced his divine wisdom, the third qualification, less conspicuously perhaps, but not less certainly, by his limitation of this miraculous work.

Let it not be objected that this argument, if valid, would prohibit all the sciences and arts of physical good, and forbid all efforts for human welfare, except such as are directed to moral improvement. For these are not, and never can be, violations of natural law. Nature contains many alleviations and partial remedies for physical evils, and many latent resources for physical good. The study and use of these is every way salutary. But, in all his acts of physical good, man must keep to nature. Whatever his discoveries or contrivances, he cannot go beyond her for it; he must take her forces and laws, and no others. Whatever, therefore, man may acquire in science and art, it is certain he never will break, disturb, or escape, the connections, which God has established in nature, between sin and physical evil. Whatever art may do, there will always be perils for

which it cannot provide. Whatever alleviations or delays it may secure, it will always be finally impotent before disease and death. However skilful it may become, it will never exempt the glutton or drunkard from the natural consequences of his vices. Science, if true, is a statement of the work and laws of God; art, if useful, is subordinate to both. We conclude therefore, that the limitation of the personal work of Christ does not logically forbid the studies and arts of physical welfare, but that it logically subordinates them all to man's higher interests.

But it may be suggested, that, without making the physical good of men his paramount object, and without interfering with the wise order of nature, Christ might have done far more than he did for this welfare, as means to the higher good that he sought. This is supposable. For instance, his knowledge may have been sufficient to have given to the world, at once, all the useful discoveries and inventions made since his time. But would such work, extraordinary though not miraculous, have been wise? Would it have contributed to the paramount object of his mission, which is really inclusive of all human good? Evidently not. *First*, Because the means of physical good cannot wisely be given to men all at once, and apart from the conditions of the receivers. Thus given, they would not be beneficial. There is a divine providence in all man's material progress. Every discovery and invention, every step in it all, has its preparation, its time, place, and connections, in which alone it is fitting and useful. And Christ would not infringe this wise order of provi

dence. *Secondly*, The increase of material means, or of knowledge, does not increase, on the whole, the physical good of men, unless there is also a proportionate increase of virtue. In the hands of iniquity they are equally increased means of evil. Firearms serve the invaders quite as well as the defenders of a country; the assassin quite as well as the police. The mariner's compass serves piracy quite as well as commerce. Labor-saving machinery, when controlled by avarice, becomes machinery for oppressing labor. The increase of a nation's wealth is no preventive of pauperism, for its pauperism and wealth are sometimes found to increase in the same ratio. *Thirdly*, The increase of material good alone is not certain to be the means of moral improvement, but is more likely to be the means of deterioration. Some, who labor exclusively to increase it, are indeed great benefactors; but they are such, only as others labor for the increase of virtue. He who would make bad and miserable people better and happier, by relieving their pains and providing for their wants, may do too much as well as too little for his object, and find himself ministering to selfishness, vice, and greater misery. Only as this material service is connected with moral and spiritual work, does it become beneficial. It must, therefore, be limited by that connection. The wise man seeks to observe that limit in his philanthropy; we have every reason to believe Christ did observe it perfectly in his.

For we notice specially: That Christ connected all his physical benefits with his teaching, so that

they illustrated it, verified its authority, and revealed its great object. He also connected all these physical benefits closely with spiritual acts. Thus he called out the blind men's faith, as he restored their sight, saying before the act, "Believe ye that I am able to do this?" and in the act, "According to your faith be it unto you." In healing the palsied man, he said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee." Thus all his miraculous works for the body, besides proving his power, expressing his tender concern for our present interests, and sustaining his doctrine of the resurrection, were also significant of, and tributary to, his paramount spiritual design.

II. The personal work of Christ in the world was limited, purposely, so as best to engage and foster a worthy faith.

Christianity is addressed peculiarly and pre-eminently to faith. It rouses the intellect, and supplies it abundantly with truth; it sets before us the end of our being, and the great law of life; it is related to all our interests. But Christianity is peculiarly the religion of restoration; it brings divine mercy and gracious help for the sinful and lost; to restore them to spiritual integrity and communion with God, to prepare them for the estate of his children; and it must, of course, be addressed to faith as its corresponding receptive exercise. Christ presented himself among men, as their divine and all-sufficient Deliverer, and, actually entering on his work, he called for their confidence. Thousands of believers answered with glad and trusting hearts. But he met

infidélity; and — always essentially the same — it was as strong, as varied, and as arrogant, when he personally confronted it, as it has ever been since. His biographies record the facts of infidelity that appeared in connection with his personal ministry, as fully as those of discipleship.

Here we meet a limitation in his work, which is very unexpected, and, at first, may be perplexing. We are apt to suppose, that, when Christ personally met infidelity, he would clear it all away — that, if it could withstand his teaching and the manifestations of his personal excellence, he would overcome and subdue it by special displays of miraculous power. But he did not. He corrected the errors of inquirers, he confuted objections, he argued with opposers, he silenced the questioners that came to entangle or accuse him; but all this was in the ordinary course of his work. He worked no miracles to overcome and subdue the infidelity that resisted his teachings and personal excellence. The villagers of Nazareth, who were offended at him, notwithstanding his manifest wisdom, and whose unbelief was so unreasonable that he marvelled at it, expected him to do such miracles there, as he had done at Capernaum. "But he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." This did not prevent the possibility, but, in his view, it did prevent the propriety, of special miraculous works there; he would not crush that infidelity with additional miracles for the purpose. When arraigned before the Sanhedrim, he did not call a sign from heaven, to prove to those unbelieving priests and rulers that he was the Messiah. When

presented before Herod, the king hoped he would work a miracle in his presence; but he did nothing and said nothing. When he was on the cross, the unbelieving people, and even the chief priests, scribes, and elders, who gratified their cruel hostility by gazing on his agonies, derided his weakness and said, "He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him." His whole public life was filled with the most conclusive proofs of his divine mission, which they could not deny, but would not admit; some of which were miracles greater than the act which they then demanded. But just as he was dying, the infidelity of the nation challenged Christ to this definite sign, and pledged faith on its performance. He did not come down from the cross; he made no answer to the challenge. Did the nails hold him there? Nay; rather he held on to the nails.

Christ was frequently, and sometimes most severely, tempted to overcome infidelity by miracles for that special purpose. He was conscious of ample power; his refusal thus to use it exposed him to misrepresentation; he was anxious that truth should prevail; he well knew the influence of the unbelief of leading men; he was taunted with weakness; he was challenged by his enemies; but he never consented. In this restraint of his power, we find one of the most remarkable facts of his life. And, judging from his life, if he were now in the world again, engaged in the same mission as before, all the infidelity in the land, with all the modern advantages

which it claims, with all its boasts of science, with all its taunts of the weakness of Christianity, aided by all the doubts and fears of half-hearted Christians, would not be able to provoke from him any miracles for its special confutation.

Why did he thus limit himself? Because, beyond a reasonable amount, additional evidence, even though miraculous, has no effect on unbelief except to increase and confirm it. Where unbelief demands more than is reasonable, it can resist all it demands. The labors of Christ were public; all who wished could attend his teachings and witness his mighty works. These had been performed in all parts of the land, in the most public places, in Jerusalem, in the temple itself, before multitudes of people. There were witnesses of them at the crucifixion. The rulers well knew the facts; many of them were personal witnesses. The empty sepulchre of Lazarus was not very far from the cross. Lazarus himself, and many who were present at his resurrection, were witnesses of his power. But unbelief of Christ was as prevalent, when he was personally present, engaged in his work, even when he healed the sick and raised the dead in the sight of multitudes, as it has ever been since, as his faithful histories plainly show. He might have silenced its cavilling voice and paralyzed its persecuting hand, for the time, by some special acts; but it would have been still unchanged in the hearts of unbelievers, and his special work against it would have been no advantage, but rather a disadvantage to his religion. Had he come down from the cross, his enemies would have crucified him

again. He would have performed a conspicuous, but useless, miracle at the cowardly challenge of an unbelief so perverse as to be nothing different from monstrous wickedness. His refusal to comply with its demand, then, as always, however tempted, was an act far greater than such a miracle. This reveals his transcendent excellence; it is the unparalleled instance of patience; it proves that his self-control, wisdom, and fidelity to his mission, were as great as his power; it proves that his love could not fail in any suffering. This limitation of his work, toward infidelity, is one of those less conspicuous, but really pre-eminent facts, which prove Christ worthy of an unlimited faith.

While Christ limited his work, on one side, toward unbelievers, so as to deny their unreasonable demands, he limited it also, on the other, toward believers, so as to allow freedom for faith, and to require its vigorous exercise. Where there is faith, there must be room for doubt; and, till faith becomes perfect, it is opposed by doubt, and grows by overcoming it. Now Christ did not attempt to prevent the possibility of doubt; he left it room enough. He did not conceal the difficulties of his doctrines and precepts; he did not explain the mysteries that he revealed; some of his statements were obscure, some paradoxical, many very difficult to be understood and believed. His conduct often disappointed or perplexed his followers. But he did not hasten to render them special relief; he made no attempt to do something for every case of doubt. He was exceedingly gentle and helpful; but he did not treat

a sickly faith with effeminate indulgence, not even though his disciples abandoned him. He could nurture faith, even though it were small as a grain of mustard seed, but it must *be* seed, not chaff. He did nothing to exempt believers from the struggles with doubt, which naturally occur in their recovery from sin; nothing to allow in their faith either carelessness or presumption; nothing to lessen the necessary exposure and exercise by which faith becomes vigorous.

Christ engaged, and fostered, the faith of men, by presenting himself to them in his proper work as their Saviour. As soon as he presented his person and began his work, he revealed, and at the same time supplied their real need. This called for faith; and for more and more, as he continued to reveal and supply their need. He brought to men divine light, love, and help; he made these manifest in his person, and in his personal service for those who would receive it. He made it evident that he revealed God, that he had authority to forgive sin, and power to give eternal life; and he claimed a confidence proportioned to his powers and benefits. He presented himself as the sufficient object of every man's unlimited trust and love; and the reasons, evidences, motives, and even the spirit, of the faith that he required, and that every man needs to exercise, all appeared in his person and personal work. But, beyond his proper work as the Saviour of the sinful and lost, he made no additional effort, either to remove the difficulties of believers, or to overcome the opposition of unbelievers. Herein he commends himself to every reasonable mind; indeed, this limi-

tation of his work, fairly considered, makes one of the strongest claims to faith.

If the work of Christ, thus limited, was sufficient for the faith of his contemporaries, then it is for ours. It appeared only in parts to most of them; it is a complete whole to us. It appeared sudden and sometimes bewildering to them; it appears to us with all the tests of time, study, opposition, practical benefits, and varied connection with human experience, for eighteen centuries. Nor does this historic distance reduce the evidences. For, of all the clear and strong lines of history running from his times to ours, by far the clearest and strongest spring out of the life of Christ. And present facts show that his life was never more potent with men than it is to-day.

We walk about and do our business in the light of the sun; we paint our pictures in his rays, with hardly a thought of his distance. But when we do think of it, the light is not less bright and useful, while the distance reveals to us the magnitude and power of that great luminary. So it is with the present influence, and the historic distance, of the life of Christ.

We conclude that Christ limited his work, purposely, and against all temptations to extend it, at the line where it meets, in all times, a reasonable and worthy faith; and that this limitation itself forms one of his singular and pre-eminent claims to our faith.

III. In the revelation and statement of truth, Christ limited himself by its connection with the

study and culture of the individual Christian, and of his church as a whole.

We do not refer to the boundaries of his revelation, beyond which curiosity may go, but beyond which he has given no knowledge,—for, of course, there must be such boundaries somewhere, and we have no reason to complain of these,— but we refer to those limitations in his truth, which, at first, perplex us.

The main truths of Christianity are made so plain, that they may be conveyed by proclamation; the directions are so plain, that any may take them and find the way of life. Yet Christianity is an educating revelation; it is all in lessons, for study. Those who hear the news and obey the call in the proclamation, become disciples; and they never leave the school, never finish the study. The same is true of the whole church. This is the nineteenth century of her schooling in the same Christian lessons. Now these lessons have been remarkably successful in securing study. What infinite exercise of the human soul over Christ's sayings, ever since he uttered them! What harvests of thought and spiritual excellence from that seed! And his words are still as engaging as ever; they are not likely to interest less in the future. The attainments, made by the single disciple, or by the whole church, are only steps to the further progress that these teachings require. All must admit their unlimited intellectual and spiritual fruitfulness.

But we must also admit, that there have always been among Christians great perplexity and differ-

ences about these truths. The most studious and devout persons have often been in error about them. Sincere and learned teachers have misinterpreted them. The church has always been divided, often distracted, sometimes in bitter controversy about them. And the natural consequences, weakness, infidelity, fanaticism, and oppression, have been abundant. Now it is probably true, that a few additional or explanatory words from Christ might relieve this disciple's perplexity, or clear away that one's error, or even settle some great question that has divided the church. A few additional chapters in the New Testament might have prevented many of the difficulties, mistakes, and disputes, which have arisen from it as it stands. Why, then, did Christ so limit his teachings?

Here, we observe, that Christ anticipated all these troublesome consequences; indeed the same occurred under his own personal teaching. He, indeed, relieved perplexity, corrected error, and settled disputed questions, as he taught; but his teaching occasioned other perplexities, errors, and disputes, which he did not thus terminate. And now we answer our question: Christ limited his teachings, in the interest of education, so as to connect them best with man's study and discipline.

It does not follow, because additional teachings might prevent this or that perplexity or error, that there might be additional teachings enough to prevent all perplexity and error. For the liability to these lies in the conditions of the pupil, and it will remain, whatever the text-book. The attempt, by the teacher,

to prevent the possibility of their occurrence, would destroy the educational value of his teaching. The New Testament could not be made large enough for this purpose; and, if it could, it would be good for nothing as the text-book for training the soul. Perplexity, error, and differences of view, are common incidents in the best educational processes; and, when sinful man becomes the disciple, to be trained to the ends and with the truths that Christ sets before him, they will all certainly appear in the process. And Christ was too wise a teacher to weaken the educating power of the truth he taught, by attempting to prevent any results incidental to its best effects. Let it be remembered, that his object is not to prevent difficulties and mistakes in learning, but to recover man to holiness. The pupil's factor is as essential to this product as the teacher's; and it consists of all his mental and spiritual activity. This must not be limited, because its action is imperfect. The teacher cannot do all the work, because the pupil does imperfect work, because he is from time to time perplexed or mistaken. On the contrary, the teacher must limit his own work to the line of greatest effect on the energies of his pupil.

We do not undertake to show, that the actual limitations of the teachings of Christ, exactly coincide with this line. It may be impossible, and it is not necessary, to prove this. The truth Christ taught, in the limits and forms in which he left it, has immense power on the minds and hearts of men. If they become subject to the truth, this is all most efficient and salutary educating power. We show

the wisdom of Christ, in not impairing the educating power of his truth, by any attempts to prevent its incidental effects, however troublesome these may seem to us to be. This is enough for our purpose.

But there are abundant special reasons for satisfaction with the limiting forms, in which Christ has given us his truth. We suggest a few: Some disciples are perplexed on truths or duties, which others see clearly; the form of Christ's teaching turns them back to the preliminary lessons, which they have not yet learned. There is much difference among Christians on some points that are plain enough in the New Testament; the refusal of further explanation is the requirement of closer study, or better spiritual qualification to find the truth. To many of our religious questions, the New Testament refuses to give any positive answers: the refusal leads us to a wholesome criticism of the question, or gives us a lesson in patience, or teaches us not to dogmatize too far, — either of which is doubtless better for us than the answer. We find we cannot formulate all Christian truth satisfactorily; it is too large for our forms; our Christian philosophy and theology are always scanty and imperfect enough to make us humble. But our admiration of the design and wisdom of Christ is increased by the fact that, nevertheless, he does not give us a ready-made science of Christianity to repeat by rote, but requires us to make our own, as a part of our culture.

IV. The personal work of Christ on earth is limited exactly where it connects with his higher rela-

tions to his people, and his higher services for them.

All the transactions of his earthly history were necessary to his mission as the Saviour of the world — the manifestation of his divine-human person and perfect character; his revelation of the Kingdom of Heaven, his mighty works, sinless example, his temptations, shame, pain, death, resurrection, and all the minor acts and incidents of his life, revealing his participation in all common human experiences, and his varied and intense sympathies with men, — all this was necessary, and this was all that was necessary, except the final act, to fulfil his work here. He confined himself strictly to this; he remained on earth not a day after this was done.

The reason is clear and decisive. The final and crowning act of this necessary work of the Saviour was the resumption of his glory, in his ascension to Heaven. What his resurrection was to his death, his ascension was to his whole life on earth. Both prove his self-sacrifice; his ascension proves his self-sacrifice in his incarnation — that his history was the human life of the Son of God. He refers to it as the consummation of all his acts and evidences. "What if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" Now this same act, that completes his necessary work on earth, also terminates his stay. The ascension must follow, to complete the whole, as soon as all the other necessary transactions of his life were finished. The completion of these, therefore, decides the length of his residence.

His ascension is, alike, the glorious consummation of his earthly life-work, and his entrance on his higher and permanent relations to all his people. That work being done, his appropriate place, even with reference to his people and cause here, is the throne of his Kingdom in Heaven. Now all his relations to them are complete: his earthly work all set before them; the benefits of it all available; his Person, the object of their supreme love, exalted in his supremacy and glory. It is suitable that the Leader should go forward to the land where his followers are gathering. His ascension draws their affections upward after him; it lifts their hopes over the darkness of the grave; it brightens the anticipations of their own departure. It may be easy for a Christian to die, to go to the world where Christ is, in his blessedness and glory; it would be very hard for him to die, if he must leave Christ here. The apostles could not anticipate his heavenly glory, while Christ was with them in his humiliation and service. His discourses about it, and even the bright special vision of it, which three of them witnessed in the Transfiguration, had but a slight effect on them, till after the ascension. But his exaltation kindles in the Christian intense aspiration to see and share his glorious heavenly estate.

And as Christ is now in the place in which he fulfils all the need of his people, so he is also in the place of power and advantage for his cause. His ascension and enthronement, where the advance of the Redeemed are gathered, drawing the affections and hopes of his people, in their struggles here, to

the glories of his kingdom on high, are more to his cause than centuries filled with continued earthly service could have been without them. His ascension to heaven is one of the great transactions for the advancement of his kingdom on earth; his enthronement is one of the great securities of its success.

It may, however, be supposed that Christianity lost *some* advantages, though it gained greater ones, by the termination of his personal service here. Not so, we reply: Those greater advantages were not gained at any such expense. For,

V. The personal work of Christ on earth was limited just where it connects with that of his followers.

After he had accomplished what was essential to his earthly mission as the Saviour, he withdrew from what he might have done in person for the propagation and prevalence of his religion, and left the whole work to his people. At his departure he committed the publication and teaching of his religion, the training of disciples and of the whole church, first to his apostles, and through them to his followers, in every age, till the end of the world. And this, we claim, was an advantage to his cause.

The simple power of social diffusion in Christianity is very strong. But besides this, Christ calls every believer to be, like himself, a minister to others. The believer is prepared for the service by his personal religious experiences, by his gratitude and devotion to Christ, and his interest in his kingdom. The appointmeut to it is most honorable to

the Christian, for the same service is assigned to him, so far as he can take it, that Christ himself performed. He shares with Christ in the toils and trials of his kingdom here, and he is appointed to share with him in its future glories. The great cause needs every Christian, and every Christian needs the service; it is his employ, discipline, culture, his preparation for the higher services and the rewards of the future kingdom. Besides all that Christ has done for him, every Christian needs to serve and be served by his brethren. So long as any people are not Christians, they will need all the church can do to Christianize them, and the church will equally need to do it. The fellowship of Christian service among believers, for edification and comfort, and for the conversion of unbelievers, is indispensable to the culture of every Christian, and to the unity, purity, and vigorous growth of the whole church. It is not only a wise arrangement, but it is a part of Christianity; without it there would be no adequate fellowship with Christ, no church, no Kingdom of Heaven.

And the church is competent to all the work required of it for its own development, and for the propagation and prevalence of Christianity in the world, without any further personal work of Christ, and without any more truths, gifts, or powers, than he has provided. Facts clearly prove this: The church — if it could then be called a church — was never so small and weak as when, having gathered his faithless and disheartened disciples together after his resurrection, he personally committed this whole work to them, and then immediately left it wholly to

them by his ascension. The apostles were among the company, but, apart from their faith in him, they were very weak and imperfect men. The miraculous powers and other special gifts, conferred on them for their peculiar work, were very limited. Yet, in spite of all that Jewish and Pagan opposition could do, in less than three centuries after the Ascension, Christianity was the prevalent religion of the Roman Empire. There has never been a time when the church, if faithful, was not adequate to all that Christ left it to do for itself and the world.

But would the followers always *be* faithful to this great trust? And if they might not be, was it wise to leave wholly to them a work so important? We answer: The fidelity of the church is itself a great part of the end sought. Without this, of course, Christianity cannot prevail, even though Christ should labor here in person for it. And, to secure fidelity, Christ must devolve on the church the whole work which belongs to it, and the doing of which is essential also to its vigor and growth. If he should relieve it of its work in case it should be unfaithful, he would abet its unfaithfulness.

The church has been unfaithful,— at times, very unfaithful. Christianity has been perverted and corrupted; its light has gone out in some lands which it once illumined. But his cause had similar reverses when he was in the world, and we have no reason to think it would have been otherwise, had he remained. Looking backward, the progress of Christianity seems slow. There have been declensions, reverses, apostasies; not half the world is even nominally

Christian now; the church is weak; infidelity is active. The faint-hearted or remiss or impatient Christian may wonder why Christ did not do more for the success of his cause before he went away, or wish he would come again and revive faith by his personal presence, and help on his work with new miracles. All this Christ clearly foresaw; yet he left to his followers all the service that belongs to them. He gave them the greatest motive to faithfulness, by committing this great interest to their trust. He knew that in *their doing* this work, lies the actual success of his religion in the world; and that they might do it all, he, without any hesitation or misgiving, left it all to them to do. The historic vicissitudes of Christianity are revelations of the strength of sin, which it contends against, and of its own innate power. But the appeal of Christ to the fidelity of his followers, made by committing wholly to them their part of his work, the obligation and inspiration of the work itself, the fellowship of all faithful Christians with Christ and each other in it and in its results, are some of the most potent motives of his religion — far more efficacious for its prevalence than any additional work of Christ could be without them. This limitation of his work, where it connects with that of his people, is one of the positive advantages of Christianity.

VI. The personal work of Christ on earth was limited, so as to connect with the work of the Holy Spirit.

What Christ has personally done is all objective;

it was done for men, set before them, offered to them. There is in Christianity a corresponding subjective work,— a divine work wrought in the soul, in and with its own activities. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. Now the work *for* man must be complete, that the work *in* him may be most effective; the sensible presence of Christ must be withdrawn, that his spiritual presence might be fully realized. He came to the world that he might get near to men; he went away that he might get nearer still; the paradox is an accurately stated truth. He came, that he might manifest himself to the senses; he withdrew this sensible manifestation, that he might present himself spiritually and more directly to the soul. Now that all parts of his work,— of his personal work have been actually fulfilled, now that he has actually taken all the relation of Saviour to them,— his whole work with all its various services, is available, at once, to every man, always, everywhere, and in all his various need. Christ is now before every soul, with all he ever did and bore, in all the relations he ever took. The Gospel is not the mere record of what he once said, but his living word. His earthly experiences are not mere history, but the forms which his perpetual grace to sinful men has taken,— forms apt and sufficient for all men, in all times.

While Christ was sensibly present among men, his presence must be local; his services for them must be special and temporary; so he could not serve the need of all. But now that his bodily presence is withdrawn, and all his earthly work is complete, the

Divine Spirit everywhere enters the souls of men, and Christ becomes spiritually ubiquitous and all-sufficient. All that he ever did and bore, all the relations that he ever took, become living spiritual realities, answering always and everywhere the believer's want. Thus the work of Christ was limited, so as to become illimitable; his outward sensible work was limited, so that his inward spiritual work might be illimitable.

On this point we need not theorize; we need not undertake to state the exact relations of the personal work of Christ to that of the Holy Spirit; the simple facts abundantly answer our purpose. He said to his disciples, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you." The Spirit's work could not be done, while the great outward transactions of Redemption were going on; these must be outwardly complete, then inwardly realized to men. But as soon as they were complete, it was expedient that Christ should depart. The results prove this. He left the world; the Spirit came; then what a change in his disciples! How timid the apostles before! how courageous then! They had forsaken him in his trial, they were disheartened by his death; but when the Spirit came, they publicly charged the rulers and people with his murder, and proclaimed in the temple, that he, whom they with wicked hands had crucified and slain, was risen from the dead, and was their Lord and Messiah. Before, they had been so spiritually obtuse, that they often failed to apprehend his personal teaching. Then, they were

so illumined, that all his teachings, and all the old prophecies concerning him, became suddenly clear. Then, their words about him were far more effective than his had been, when he spoke of himself. The moral and spiritual transformation wrought by their ministry, the first work after the Spirit came, was probably greater than had been wrought by the whole personal ministry of Christ. Probably more were converted the first day, than had been during his whole life. He had predicted all this; he declared, that, because he went away, they should do greater works than his. This was fulfilled, not in their outward miracles, for these were not as great as his, but in blessed changes wrought by the Spirit in the souls of men.

When Christ withdrew from the world, a power appeared in Christianity far greater than his personal presence. When he closed his personal work, a spiritual work began in men, closely connected with his, but far greater than what he had effected among them. The history of his life had far more moral power after he had gone, than its acts and events had when they were transpiring. His truth, taught by very weak, imperfect men, had more spiritual efficiency, than when he taught it originally himself.

And this power was not temporary. Pentecost has been repeated many times in the history of the Church. Christianity has shown as great spiritual vitality and aggressive vigor, in this nineteenth century, as it did in the first. Its fruits are more manifest, abundant, and blessed, in this than in any other. The Gospel, faithfully preached, has now

more moral and spiritual power, than when Christ preached in person. There are disciples, now, who, by the power of the Spirit, do, as he predicted they would, even greater works than his.

We conclude that the personal work of Christ on earth was sufficient. For the study of its limitations reveals pre-eminent reasons for our faith, and proves that the powers of Christianity are adequate to its proposals.

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